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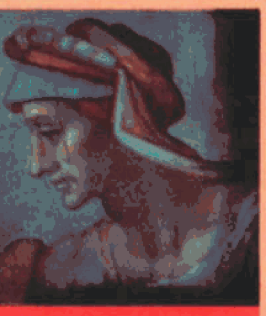


Michelangelo's True Colors

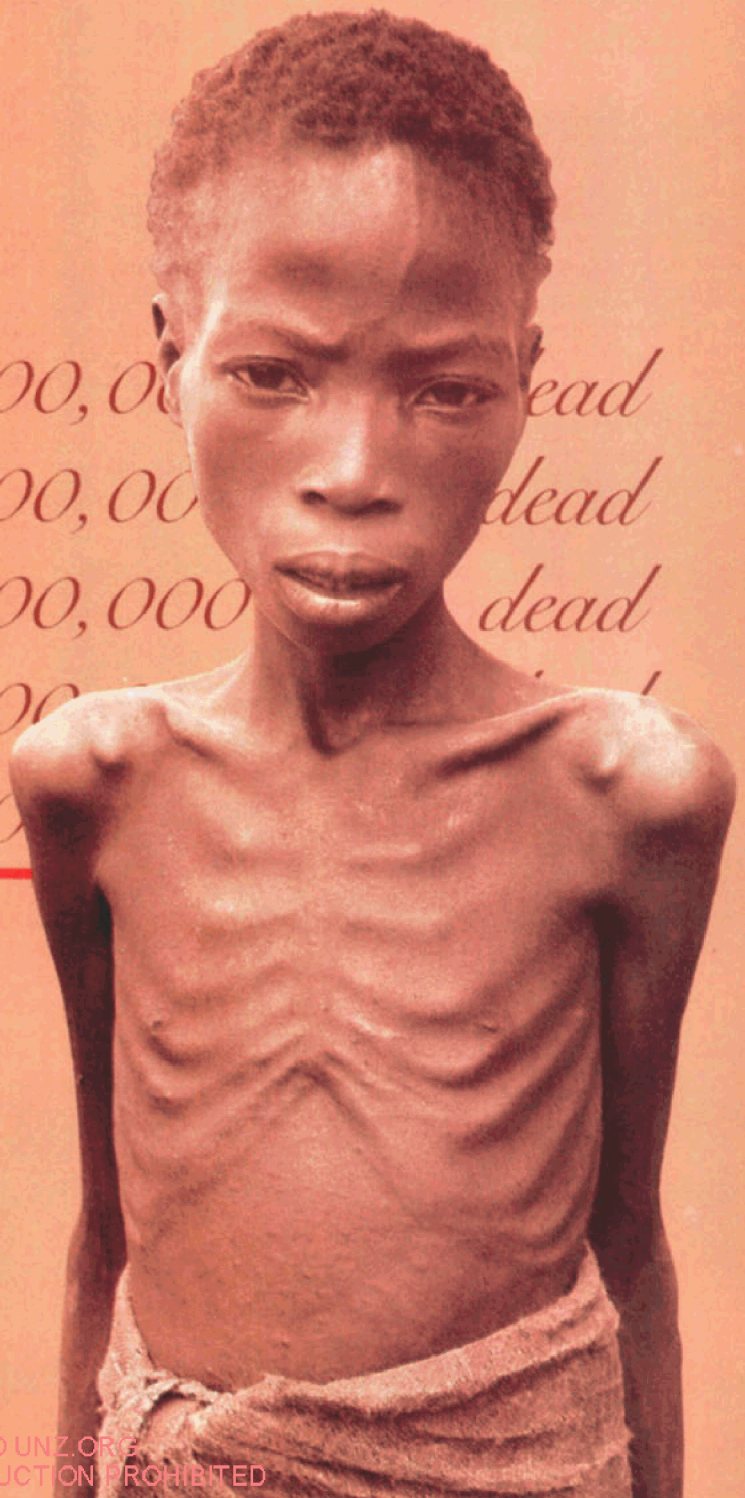
Ethiopia: 1,000,0 ead

Cambodia: 2,000,00 dead

Nigeria: 1,000,000 dead

China: 25-30,000

Soviet Union: 10-15,00



FAMINE OR MURDER? THE POLITICS OF HUNGER

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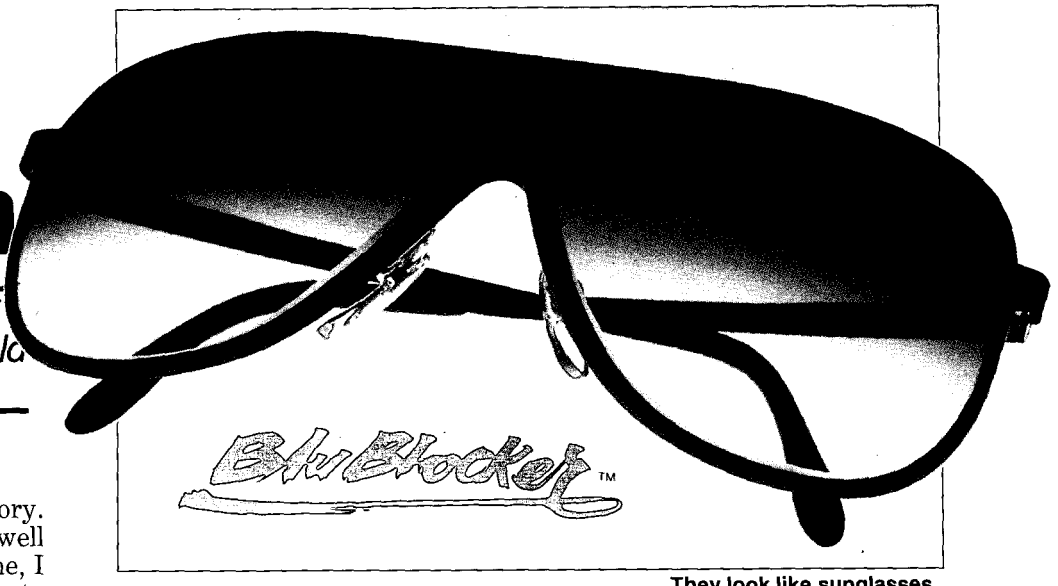
Vision Breakthrough

When I put on the pair of glasses what I saw I could not believe. Nor will you.



They look like sunglasses.

By Joseph Sugarman

I am about to tell you a true story. If you believe me, you will be well rewarded. If you don't believe me, I will make it worth your while to change your mind. Let me explain.

Len is a friend of mine who knows good products. One day he called excited about a pair of sunglasses he owned. "It's so incredible," he said, "when you first look through a pair, you won't believe it."

"What will I see?" I asked. "What could be so incredible?"

Len continued, "When you put on these glasses, your vision improves. Objects appear sharper, more defined. Everything takes on an enhanced 3-D effect. And it's not my imagination. I just want you to see for yourself."

COULDN'T BELIEVE EYES

When I received the sunglasses and put them on I couldn't believe my eyes. I kept taking them off and putting them on to see if indeed what I was seeing was indeed actually sharper or if my imagination was playing tricks on me. But my vision improved. It was obvious. I kept putting on my $100 pair of sunglasses and comparing them. They didn't compare. I was very impressed. Everything appeared sharper, more defined and indeed had a greater three dimensional look to it. But what did this product do that made my vision so much better? I found out.

The sunglasses (called BluBlockers) filter out the ultraviolet and blue spectrum light waves from the sun. Blue rays have one of the shortest wavelengths in the visible spectrum (red is the longest). As a result, the color blue will focus slightly in front of the retina which is the "focusing screen" in your eye. By blocking the blue from the sunlight through a special filtration process, and only letting those rays through that indeed focus clearly on the retina, objects appear to be sharper and clearer.

The second reason is even more impressive. It is harmful to have ultra-violet rays fall on our eyes. Recognized as bad for skin, UV light is worse for eyes and is believed to play a role in many of today's eye diseases.

SUNGLASS DANGER

But what really surprised me was the danger in conventional sunglasses. Our pupils close in bright light to limit the light entering the eye and open wider at night like the lens of an automatic camera. So when we put on sunglasses, although we reduce the amount of light that enters our eyes, our pupils open wider and we allow more of the harmful blue and ultraviolet light into our eyes.

DON'T BE CONFUSED

I'm often asked by people who read this, "Do those Blu-Blockers really work?" They really do and please give me the opportunity to prove it. I guarantee each pair of BluBlockers to perform exactly as I described.

BluBlocker sunglasses use Malenium-99™ lenses with a hard anti-scratch coating. No shortcuts were taken.

The black, light-weight frame is one of the most comfortable I have ever worn and will comfortably contour to any size face. It compares with many of the $200 pairs you can buy from France or Italy.

There is a clip-on pair that weighs less than one ounce and fits over prescription lenses. All models include a padded carrying case and a one-year limited warranty.

I urge you to order a pair and experience your improved vision. Then take your old sunglasses and compare them to the BluBlocker sunglasses. See how much clearer and sharper objects appear with the BluBlocker pair. And see if your night vision doesn't improve as a direct result. If you don't see a dramatic difference in your vision—one so noticeable that you can tell immediately, then send them back anytime within 30 days and I will send you a prompt and courteous refund.

DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE

But from what I've personally witnessed, once you wear a pair, there will be no way you'll want to return it.

Our eyes are very important to us. Protect them and at the same time improve your vision with the most incredible breakthrough in sunglasses since they were first introduced. Order a pair or two at no obligation, today.

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Free Minds & Free Markets

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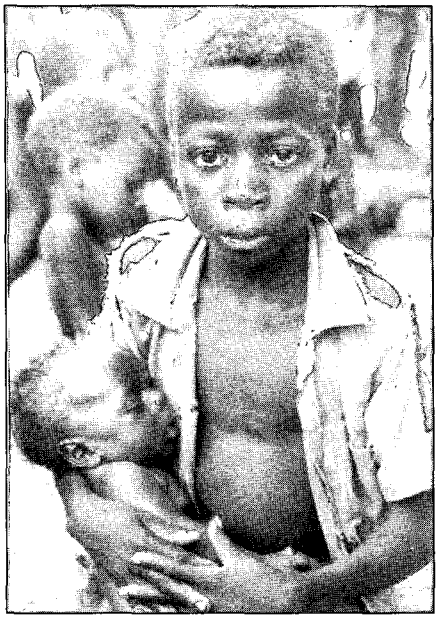

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LETTERS

Visa Vices

Bill Forman ("Musical Aliens Keep Out," April) touched on a very important but overlooked issue, namely, the way the Reagan administration has been making it more difficult for business persons of all types to come into the United States.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has slowly changed its policy by claiming that visas were intended by Congress to be available only for large businesses. Not only were the H-1 visas for entertainers affected but also visas for intracompany transferees, investors, and treaty traders.

This problem goes beyond the INS. Visas are usually granted at American consulates, where the officials have almost unlimited authority. They can deny visas for any or no reason, and there is no practical avenue of review. The Reagan administration has appointed persons to these positions who deny visas whenever the opportunity arises. Persons wishing to do business here find it difficult to obtain visas unless they can prove that they are leaving substantial assets or family at home. Tourists may be inhibited from applying, since if you are refused a visa your name may be placed on a computer, which makes it even more difficult to apply again.

Visa refusals have also been used to exclude opponents of administration views. Congress has begun to address this issue, but it remains to be seen whether Congress will champion a cause that the voters do not notice.

America was founded on noble ideals. The very best way we can show the world the greatness of our ideals is to live by them. By treating the world's entertainers, business persons, tourists, and visitors as undesirables, we tell them that we do not practice and believe what we preach.

Harry A. DeMell
Association of Immigration Attorneys
New York, NY

Contra Controversies

Was Marty Zupan's editorial ("Beyond Contra Aid," April) an April Fool's Day joke? How else could she urge us to defend an anti-Sandinista line-in-the-dirt with "U.S. air and naval power" and simultaneously tell us that we must not "throw our weight around" and must refrain from using "the coercive power of our state" to undermine the Sandinistas?

Ortega will consider a threat of air and naval power to be *both* Yankee weight and an undermining of his state. Nor will he see a substantive difference between, on the one hand, U.S. planes and ships, and, on the other hand, our funding of the Contras with guns and Stingers—because there isn't any.

As to "drawing a line" that the Soviets and Sandinistas "must not cross," that's puffery. They long ago crossed it. The line was called the Monroe Doctrine. If that's too out-of-step with "noninterventionist" fashion, bear in mind that every president since Kennedy said we'd not tolerate another communist state in the Americas.

The problem isn't a lack of line drawing; it's the untidy action that follows—jerking a commie mugger off his victims and putting him away so he can't hurt even more innocent people.

E. G. Ross
Eugene, OR

MS. ZUPAN'S EDITORIAL IS AT BEST a terrible prescription for dealing with the Sandinistas. It is disgusting to imply that aid to the Contras is a form of welfare. The Contras are fighting to overturn a Soviet client state that is pointed like a dagger at the United States' border. In contradistinction (no pun intended), welfare recipients are simply parasites who drain the U.S. economy.

Ms. Zupan's call for keeping the government out of aiding the Contras and having private organizations fund both the

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HOW TO CARE FOR THE NEW BASE COAT/CLEAR COAT FINISH ON YOUR CAR.

TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS.

Base coat/clear coat painting is a better way to paint cars. Instead of the old single layer of lacquer or enamel color coat, General Motors now uses two layers of paint on most of our models. The base layer contains the pigment or color, and the top layer is a clear coat of acrylic polymer to bring out the brilliance of the color and give a glossy, mirror-like finish.

The principle is like that of a mirror: the clear coat functions like the glass.

With single coat finishes, the color is exposed to the atmosphere, so sun, water, wind and dirt can cause deterioration. With base coat/clear coat paint, the color is not exposed to the atmosphere, so the desirable characteristics of the finish last longer.

Base coat/clear coat finishes require less maintenance, but they, like all paints, are susceptible to abrasives, which will scratch the finish or give it a hazy appearance, reducing both its gloss and imaging (mirror-like) qualities.

Wash any base coat/clear coat finish with gentle, non-abrasive cleaners, rinsing away all loose dirt with plenty of water before sponging on the soapy solution.

Rinse the cloth or sponge or change it frequently to avoid scratching the finish with dirt or grit. If you use a commercial tar or bug remover, read the instructions carefully, then try it out on an inconspicuous area first.

If you use a commercial car wash, look for one that uses a soft scrub system. A few car wash systems employ harsh brushes, which may scratch the clear coat finish.

Base coat/clear coat paint need not be polished as often as a lacquer or enamel to remove the grime and effects of weathering. When you do polish it (once or twice a year), use a mild cleaning wax, not an abrasive. Polish gently, by hand.

Avoid mechanical polishing or sanding of the surface.

Don't use a scrub brush on the paint or on the wheels, if they're aluminum mag wheels with clear coat paint on them.

You can help maintain the finish on your car by parking and driving wisely. Try not to park under trees, where bird droppings or sap, which contain compounds that can injure the finish, may fall onto your car. Try to park upwind from industrial areas. If you get cement dust or fly ash on your car from any fire or smokestack, rinse it off immediately.

When you drive, go easy on the gas pedal to keep stones from flying up and chipping the paint during quick starts. When traveling on dirt or gravel roads, put some extra distance between you and the car ahead to avoid running into stones thrown into the air by that car's tires.

If you get a scratch or chip in the finish, and it's a deep one, you should probably seek expert repair advice on how to keep it looking good and to avoid exposing bare metal to the elements. If the scratch is small, auto supply stores and GM dealers offer two-step touch-up paints to repair the underlying color coat and the clear coat finish.

General Motors has made this better finish standard for all colors on most models of cars and trucks. Consult your owner's manual or ask your dealer whether your car has base coat/clear coat paint.

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Sandinistas and the freedom fighters is simply anarchism. Many libertarians do not realize that there is a difference between a government's proper function and the workings of a free economy.

The argument that we should not fund the Contras because Mr. Ortega might whine about it is ridiculous. Why should America worry about the bleatings of a bloody Marxist tyrant?

Ms. Zupan's call for an American draw-the-line solution is nothing less than asking the United States to fight a Vietnam-style conflict in Central America. She advocates a limited response to a Nicaraguan build-up, just as Presidents Kennedy and Johnson dealt with the North Vietnamese by waiting for them to cross the Cambodian and South Vietnamese borders instead of crushing the North Vietnamese once and for all. Just as the Vietnam conflict led to demoralization and war weariness, so Ms. Zupan's call for a limited, arbitrary response (read: bloody stalemate) will also lead to demoralization—except this time the enemy will soon be at our border.

Bradley Sidman
Natick, MA

THE SINGLE BUT GAPING FLAW I find in libertarian thinking is the strange refusal to recognize the Cold War and its implications. Marty Zupan's editorial is a prime example. She writes: "Allow any and all *private* aid to the Contras. This will put them on the same footing as the Sandinistas, who are the beneficiaries of U.S. citizens' donation of funds, medicine, and other goods."

The *same footing*? The Soviets are aiding the Sandinistas at a rate of $1.35 billion in military aid annually, in addition to 3,000 military advisors. *This*—not the contributions of sympathetic leftists in America—is what Ms. Zupan's "private" contributors would have to match.

And while Ms. Zupan advocates private aid, she further writes, in apparent reference to government aid, that "we simply cannot solve this problem for the Nicaraguan people." If, however, government aid usurps Nicaraguan self-determination, then why doesn't private aid? The fact is that *neither* usurps when it amounts at best to only a fraction of what the Soviets provide the Sandinistas; it is necessary simply to balance the scales so that the will of those still in Nicaragua (500,000 have left) can best be determined.

Robert T. Peterson
Chicago, IL

LIKE MARTY ZUPAN, I favor complete withdrawal of our government from funding the Contras. (If private citizens wish to support anyone, that is their business.) I like the idea expressed in the statement, "without throwing our weight around, use liberally the force of rhetoric and diplomacy to support regional efforts toward peace and freedom." Our reputation with oppressed peoples of the earth would be enhanced by use of such a principle.

However, I believe Zupan is misinformed on a few matters. For one thing, the defector from the Sandinista government either did not make it clear or lied when he said that Nicaragua was going to increase its troop level to 600,000. Nicaragua plans to enlist 600,000 *reservists*, not regular troops, which it intends to keep between 70,000 and 80,000.

Also, I am not sure what Zupan means by the "Sandinistas' oppressive regime." To be sure, *La Prensa* was shut down because of its attacks on government policy, and a few priests were silenced one way or another (not by torture or murder, which is standard operating procedure for Guatemala, Chile, and Paraguay). One can understand why the Sandinistas would not like such outspokenness while their regime is fighting for its life. But people travel in and out of Nicaragua with little problem, whether they endorse or oppose Sandinista policies.

It definitely is not true that the Sandinistas have put in place an all-powerful state more oppressive than its predecessor. Read Penny Lernoux's account of Nicaragua under Somoza's National Guard (who are the leaders of the Contras now) in *Cry of the People*. Her facts coincide with independent, not U.S. government, observations, like those of Amnesty International.

On the other hand, I agree wholeheartedly that the Nicaraguan people have to work out their own salvation without our heavy-handed interference.

Ralph Mason Dreger
Baton Rouge, LA

WHILE I SUPPORT your suggestion that our government has no business aiding the Contras, I feel you have substantially misrepresented the reality in Nicaragua.

The "Marxist regime," as you call the government in Nicaragua, was elected in November 1984 in an election described as fair by hosts of international on-site observers, including delegations from the United States. The Nicaraguan constitution, now in full force since emergency has been lifted, was drafted, evaluated, and adopted after input from hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans.

I lived five weeks with a family in a poor barrio in Esteli in the summer of 1985. I have maintained contact with Nicaraguans and many U.S. citizens who live and work in different regions of that country. My perception is that the majority of the Nicaraguan people perceive their government not as "dictatorial," as you describe, but as democratic—not only elected by the people, but responsive to them and working for their welfare.

Nicaragua's opposition press was shut down in time of war. In the neighboring Central American countries there is no opposition press. In Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, being part of an anti-government press has repeatedly and predictably led to death. It is not surprising that the public opinion molded by what press remains might have a distorted image of Nicaraguan reality.

For good reason, there exist laws in the United States against supporting the overthrow of other nations' governments. While these laws have been selectively enforced against IRA supporters in the United States, they have been shamelessly unenforced in the case of private U.S. citizens' support for the military overthrow of the Sandinista government.

C. James Bier
Ferrum, VA

Mitchell Misreads?

Richard Mitchell ("All the Books They Have," March) drew several erroneous

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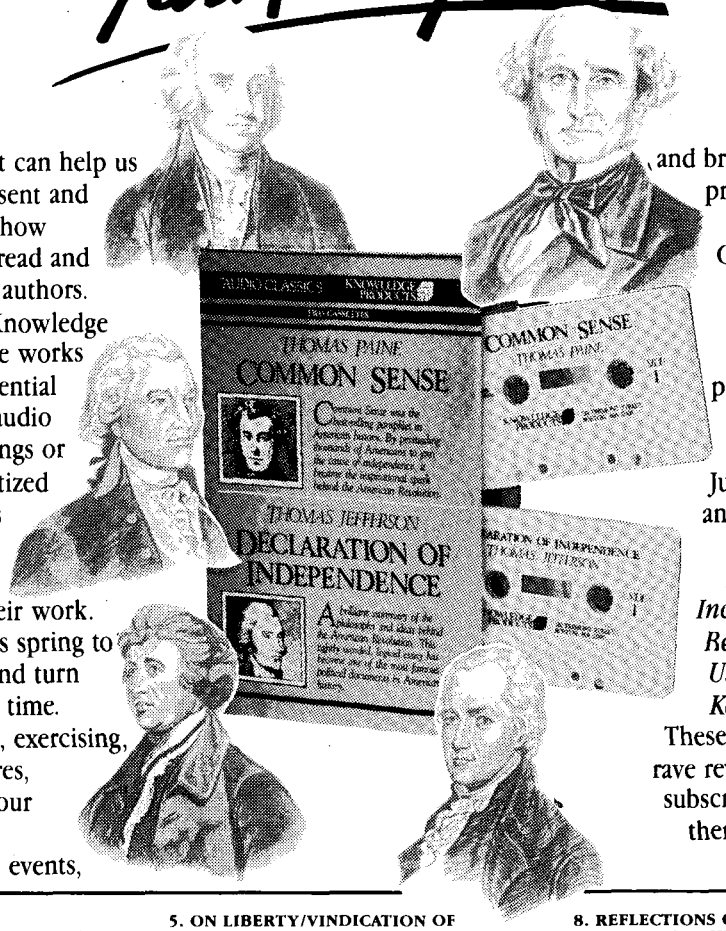

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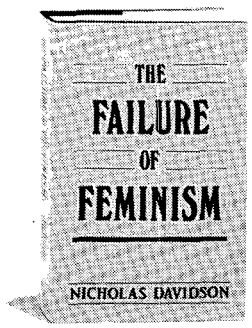
The Failure of Feminism

by Nicholas Davidson



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CATO INSTITUTE

LETTERS

inferences from my article "The Misreading of Literature" (*Aristos*, Oct. 86).

First, in the public school I referred to, *A Day No Pigs Would Die* was not the only work of fiction assigned to seventh graders. Other books studied included *Shane* and *Sounder*. (Mr. Mitchell's suggestion that Willa Cather's *My Antonia* be substituted for *A Day No Pigs Would Die* ignores the subtly introspective character of the Cather novel, which is surely beyond the grasp and interest of the average 13-year-old.)

Second, the books were not chosen to shock the parents (as Mr. Mitchell suggests) but to further the students' understanding *and enjoyment* of literature.

Third, parents who raised objections were not considered "yahoos." Nor were they answered with "weaseling or silence or politic obsequiousness or...pious slogans about 'censorship.' " In fact, the English teachers organized (on their own time and for no extra pay) evening sessions to talk about the books with parents. Moreover, teachers in that school (as in many others) assign alternate readings to any child whose parent requests it.

Finally, Mr. Mitchell's agenda apparently precluded his noting that my article was more critical of a well-known *New York Times* education writer and various politicized educators than it was of parents. (REASON readers may obtain a copy of my article from *Aristos*, P.O. Box 1105, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10101.)

Mr. Mitchell is right to question the principle of public education. But he should not make the mistake of inferring that teachers now working in the public system are, *ipso facto*, scheming "schoolers" bent on "intervening between children and parents."

Michelle Marder Kamhi
New York, NY

Correction: An error crept into David R. Henderson's column (April) "The Supply-Siders Were Right (Partly)" in the editing process. A 33 percent tax rate will apply to a few taxpayers not because of the alternative minimum tax but because of a "phase-out surtax" of 5 percent imposed by Congress on married taxpayers with taxable income between $71,900 and $149,250 and on single taxpayers with taxable incomes between $43,150 and $89,560. The alternative minimum tax is a completely separate issue.

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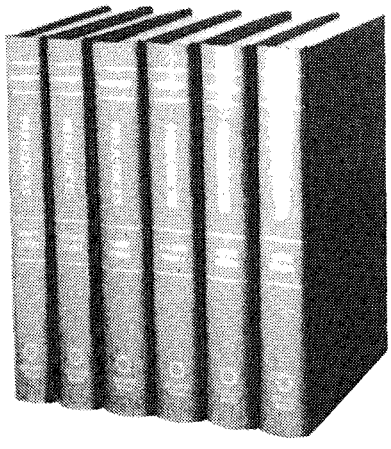

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THUGS AND DRUGS

VIRGINIA I. POSTREL

The Contras aren't even dead yet, and already constitutional government in neighboring Honduras is reeling.

Hondurans riot in the streets of Tegucigalpa. Five have been killed. Basic rights to assembly, travel, and a free press have been restricted. Police have been given broad powers to search houses, make arrests, and hold people without trials.

The Sandinistas couldn't ask for a happier hunting ground for their revolution. And they didn't have to lift a finger to produce it.

No, it is we, the would-be defenders of democracy in Latin America, who are undermining the rule of law in Honduras and elsewhere, giving aid and comfort to hoodlums and Marxist guerrillas, and wrecking for our southern neighbors the constitutional protections that we take for granted. All in the name of keeping cocaine out of the noses of Americans who are determined to snort it.

The most recent episode in the increasingly disgraceful war on drugs involves one Juan Ramón Matta Ballesteros, whose alleged crimes are numerous and-varied—specifically, involvement in the kidnapping, torture, and murder of a DEA agent in Mexico, as well as running a multibillion-dollar drug operation in Honduras. Such actions, even if "alleged," do not ordinarily qualify anyone for hero status.

But U.S. behavior in apprehending Matta has given him just such status in Honduras. Since his country's constitution inconveniently forbids extradition—pesky things, those constitutions—U.S. agents, with cooperation from Honduran authorities, basically kidnapped Matta, hustled him *sans* passport to the Dominican Republic, and brought him here for trial.

Hondurans didn't approve of our turning their country into a banana republic, and they took to the streets in protest. In response, we preached at them about democratic institutions:

"We think it is terrible that Hondurans would show their support for a notorious drug dealer by attacking a U.S. government building," said State Department spokeswoman Ellen E. Bork after a riot at the U.S. Embassy compound. "This man is a greater threat to them than to us. He represents a class of drug trafficker who wants not only to make a profit, but also to subvert democratic institutions." If subversion is his aim, Matta has friends in Washington.

As though trampling on the Honduran constitution weren't enough, U.S. agents allegedly tortured Matta with a two-pronged stun gun. His lawyer says he "counted 27 little burn marks" on Matta's lower back and that Matta told him he had similar burns on his testicles and feet.

The torture charge may not be true—if Matta is half of what they say he is, he's not likely to have strong scruples about lying—but I'd feel a lot more comfortable if somebody, anybody acted like they gave a damn and investigated.

Have we gone bananas? Toddlers are being gunned down on the streets of Los Angeles. Bribery and corruption are reaching Prohibition-level proportions in the justice system. Guerrillas, from the Maoist *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru to the garden-variety Marxists in Colombia, are piling up guns and money from the drug trade. Gangsters threaten Colombia's government and control Panama's.

But all anyone ever suggests to stop this corruption and bloodshed and aggrandizement of thugs is more of the idiocy that created them in the first place.

Americans want to buy drugs, *lots* of drugs. Gross revenue runs somewhere between $60 billion and $120 billion a year, putting the drug business between number-one General Motors ($102 billion) and number-four IBM ($54 billion) on the *Fortune* 500. This passion for chemical highs may be a character flaw, but that doesn't make the market any less real.

And, thanks to one of the world's most effective price-support programs—a.k.a. the War on Drugs—a lot of very unattractive individuals are getting very rich. Agricultural subsidies are always a bad idea, but at least when we raise prices on Farmer Jones's sorghum crop Americans get a warm, happy glow from nostalgia for the good old family farm.

Keeping drugs illegal, on the other hand, artificially raises prices for folks like Matta, people who *do* want not only to make a profit but also to undermine democratic institutions. People who kill Colombian cabinet officers and terrorize South-Central L.A. with drive-by shootings.

Drug price supports are especially effective because demand is relatively inelastic, especially among addicts—if the price goes up, revenue also rises. Cutting drug supplies by intercepting shipments or destroying coca plantations only raises prices and increases the profits of the other suppliers. The drug laws make a lucrative business even more so, then systematically screen out all but the most ruthless and risk-taking individuals.

Get rid of the drug laws, and you cut the cash flow that gives drug criminals their power. Instead of Capone or Matta, you get Seagram's and Jack Daniels. Besides, when was the last time you heard about somebody knocking over a liquor store to get money for cigarettes or, for that matter, liquor?

To restore the safety of our streets and the security of our neighbors, we must do the paradoxical. We must legalize drugs.

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NUNN'S RIGHT—LET'S DEFEND

ROBERT W. POOLE, JR.

Sen. Sam Nunn (Ga.) recently broke ranks with his fellow Democrats and endorsed the idea of defenses against an accidental or unauthorized nuclear attack.

Despite polls regularly showing that large majorities of Americans favor defenses, Nunn was quickly attacked—by both liberals and conservatives.

Liberals denounce the senator for departing from the arms-control orthodoxy, which holds the ABM Treaty as sacred writ and sees any amount of defense as upsetting the balance of terror. And indeed, Nunn recognizes that even a very limited defense will have to involve space-based components to be effective—and that violates the ABM Treaty.

Conservative critics argue that Nunn's plan is too limited to do any good, even as a first step. They generally confuse his proposal with a more limited plan developed by Reps. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) and John Spratt (D-S.C.). It would deploy only 100 ground-based interceptors at a single site, as allowed by the ABM Treaty. *National Review* correctly notes that *this* scheme could not protect either coast from submarine-launched attacks of even a single missile.

That's because a ground-based defense is limited to a specific "footprint." Even if the defense is located at the most important targets, there is no guarantee that an accidental or unauthorized launch would be aimed at those particular spots.

But ground-based defense, by itself, suffers from a more fundamental limitation. It can only attack warheads in their final stages of flight. By contrast, a space-based defense has the potential of blasting the ICBMs or SLBMs before they have lofted their warhead buses into space.

That difference is crucial. There's enormous numerical leverage in hitting the rocket itself. A single hit of an ICBM may knock out a dozen warheads and hundreds of decoys—each of which might otherwise have to be targeted separately by the ground-based system.

Consider also the impact of such a defensive capability on Soviet attack planners. Facing only a ground-based defense, they can aim enough warheads at specific key targets to have good odds of getting past the interceptors. But with space-based defenses, even of limited effectiveness, the Soviets have no way of knowing which warheads will get through. They would have to vastly increase the size of their arsenal, at huge expense.

Or they would have to give up ICBMs and SLBMs as their principal weapons. Which is the point of defenses, after all.

Recognizing the leverage of space-based defenses, Nunn proposes amending the ABM Treaty to permit limited space-based testing and deployment. Or we could simply follow the Soviets in ignoring it. Air Force intelligence recently concluded that they are poised to break out of the ABM Treaty. They are said to be linking up their early-warning radars with interceptor-guidance radars and mass-producing the latter, as well as new interceptor missiles. So the ABM Treaty may soon be a dead letter.

What's clear is that it must no longer be used to deny Americans the protection that our technology can now give us—at least against limited attacks.

MINDING THEIR OWN BUSINESS

LUCY BRAUN

Corporate America has discovered a new breed of lobbyist: its own employees. Instead of relying solely on professional lobbyists, several large companies—including Arco, Hallmark, and Pfizer—are encouraging their employees to meet, write to, and generally hobnob with their elected representatives. The goal, in the words of one company spokeswoman, is to cultivate a sizable group of "people who will go to bat" for their employers.

But the sight of big business doing the kind of grassroots lobbying that public interest groups have been doing for years incenses people like Ralph Nader. He claims the tactic is unfair and distorts the political process by making campaigns of letter writing, phone calling, etc., look like "spontaneous expression." Too bad he doesn't see the process for what it is: an inducement for employees to take an interest in issues that directly affect their livelihood and to speak out on those issues for themselves.

Nader takes the worker-as-helpless-pawn view, which envisions a company forcing its employees to lobby for anything it wants. But employees are people—thinking people, in fact, who have to be convinced that what they're asked to support is good, or at least not harmful to them—as consumers and taxpayers as well as workers. Any company that tries to punish an employee for *not* toeing its political line will forever alienate that employee and expose itself to one hell of a discrimination suit.

And if Nader opposes grassroots lobbying by *all* organizations that have power over workers, he's got quite a battle on his hands: grassroots lobbying "has paid such handsome dividends," according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "that even labor unions, traditionally far ahead of companies in getting behind political candidates, have begun to train their members on how to be part-time lobbyists."

It's interesting that Nader can say with a straight face that he opposes grassroots activities by large corporations. For years he's been trying to require utilities and other companies to stuff their bills with flyers encouraging customers to join consumer advocacy groups. Corporations, he argues, have a *moral responsibility to educate the public* and should be forced to do free advertising for him.

Maybe Nader is afraid employees might take points of view he thinks are wrong. For example, Nationwide Insurance recently urged its 22,000 employees and agents to shower Congress with letters opposing legislation that would mandate leave time for births, adoptions, and family illnesses. An estimated 500 employees responded in the first week alone.

We Americans are told all our lives to care about politics. "You can make a difference," say our parents, our civics teachers—and our employers. We shouldn't criticize them for encouraging us to put our powers to use. ◻

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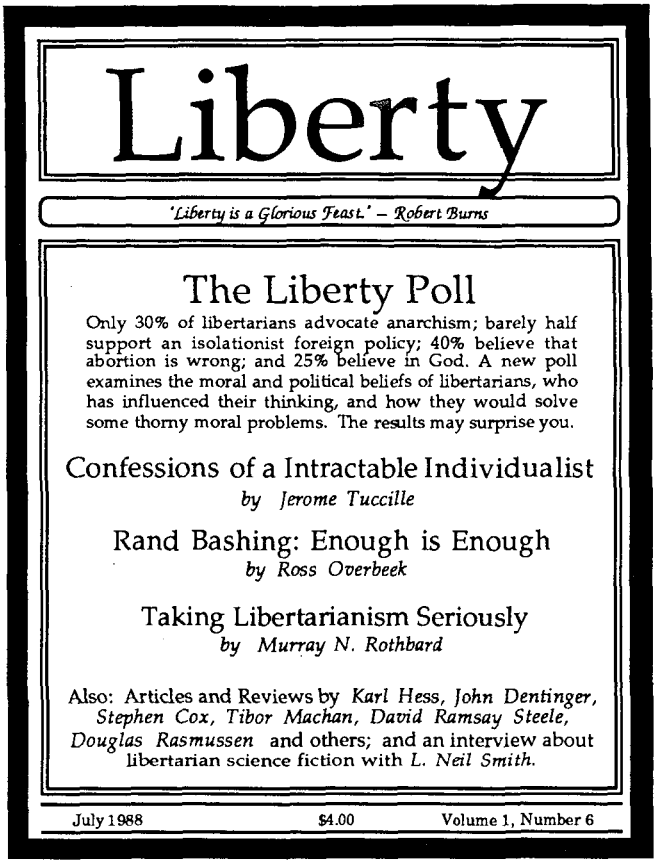
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BRICKBATS

Who will win the battle between man and nature? Lawyers, of course. A New York jury has ordered a country club to pay $1.45 million to a man who was paralyzed when a bee stung him on club property. The club's argument that where and when a bee stings a person is beyond its control didn't impress the jury.

Spuds MacKenzie, the bull terrier who helps the folks at Budweiser sell suds, is in the doghouse again. First, the Ohio Department of Liquor Control ordered thousands of 12-packs of Bud Light off the shelves because the cartons pictured Spuds wearing a Santa Claus costume. A state law bans the use of Santa Claus to promote alcohol. Then schools around the country sent students home for wearing Spuds T-shirts, claiming the garments encourage drinking. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) also attacked Spuds for fostering juvenile drinking. It's a dog's life.

School officials in Andrews, Texas, were alarmed because corporal punishment wasn't being administered equally. Now the problem is solved: all paddles will be of uniform size. Paddle A, for elementary schools, will be made of plastic and measure $^{3}/_{16}$ x 4 x 18 inches. Paddle B, for secondary schools, will be made of wood and measure $^{1}/_{2}$ x $3^{1}/_{2}$ x 22 inches. A grateful nation breathes a sigh of relief.

Police in Essex County, England, are prosecuting a sailing club for not having a license for the cannon they use to start their races. The club got nailed for violating the Offensive Weapons Act (which even makes carrying an empty beer bottle "with intent" a crime). The club commodore thinks it's all pretty silly. "Anyone attempting to rob a bank with the cannon would have to be a lunatic," he claims. "It weighs 50 pounds, is attached to a nine-inch-high wheeled trolley, you charge it with black powder and wadding and fire it with a lanyard."

"LEAVE? GOSH, NO, I'LL STAY AND HELP OUT—AS LONG AS YOU WANT ME TO, THAT IS..."

Join the Navy and say your prayers. An aircraft mechanic who is "not mechanically inclined" has prompted a global search by Navy experts for 300 crucial jet engine parts that may fail in flight because he worked on them. "For years, this guy was taking these gearboxes apart, then putting them back together—with parts left over when he was done," according to one Navy official. "What we can't figure out is why it wasn't caught sooner." Keep your parachute handy, sailor.

For the past 24 years, 61-year-old Freda Boxenbaum has been cooking and distributing free homemade soup to the poor in Jacksonville, Florida. The impoverished certainly haven't complained—but the Duval County Health Department has. The law prohibits kitchens in private homes from preparing food for public distribution. So Freda has been told to stop giving away her vegetable soup at a downtown park each morning. "I'm certainly not strong-arming this lady," protests health official Kathleen Ward. "I don't want to see people go hungry either. I just have a responsibility to make sure what she's giving is wholesome."

Maybe Iran is finally turning civilized. An official has declared that real estate agents and car dealers are nothing more than middlemen who force the price of those items up. "If estate agents and car dealers did not review their practices, legal power would be utilized and they would be declared corrupt on Earth," said the official. That's serious business: "Corrupt on Earth" is the most severe accusation in Iran, and conviction can result in the death penalty.

It's illegal in Clifton, New Jersey, to grab a handful of mints from a dish in a restaurant. Eating establishments are prohibited from offering unwrapped, "unprotected" toothpicks, straws, and mints to the public. "They don't have enough to do in the city, so now they're going to start looking for mints without a paper around it?" asked one restaurant manager.

—Mark Edward Crane

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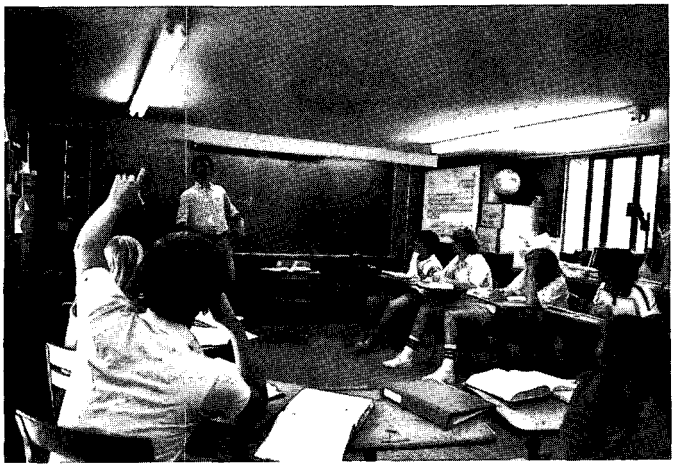
TRENDS

Choice for the New Generation?

Fumbling around for new ideas that will differentiate him from Ronald Reagan, George Bush frequently declares that he wants to be "the education president." But education (fortunately) isn't really a federal matter, and state legislators—not presidential candidates—are the ones with the "new" ideas.



One of the hottest right now is the old-fashioned notion that parents ought to have some control over where their kids go to school. A host of legislative efforts and ballot initiatives are aiming to put some choice back in the educational system. "We are considering this one of our top education issues," says Bruce Hallman of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), an organization of state legislators. "This idea of parental choice is probably one of the fastest-growing concerns among state legislators."

In Minnesota, for instance, the legislature last year passed a law that lets students in participating public school districts go to school in other participating districts. Passed late in the session and by a narrow vote, the law had limited impact this year but promises more in the future.

"It's catching on," Ken Zastrow, director of district support services for the state Department of Education, told REASON. This year 95 of the state's 435 districts participated, with about 137 students opting to cross district lines. Next year, another 58 districts join the program and about 420 students are expected to switch. A bill now under consideration would require districts to give their students the right to get out—taking about $3,000 each in state education aid with them.

Despite its public school focus, the Minnesota plan is too radical for many—a similar bill recently crashed and burned in Colorado, thanks to overwhelming opposition from every educational establishment group. But efforts to extend parental choice to private, as well as public, schools are making headway in some states.

In a possible model for the federal government, Iowa now lets parents deduct private school tuition from their state income taxes. And Wyoming state Senator Kelly Mader is pushing legislation to reimburse parents $1,000 for each child attending private schools.

Finally, Montana voters will have the chance to vote on an initiative that would provide each student with a voucher equal to what the state would spend on him for public schooling. Parents could then use the voucher at the private or public school of their choice.

Hallman told REASON that ALEC plans to include educational-choice bills in its sourcebook of model legislation that "we feel is going to be on the cutting edge of legislative trends." If George Bush really wants to be the education president, maybe he should hop aboard the bandwagon.

For Your Information

Groups or individuals mentioned in this month's Trends:

■ School Choices
Bruce Hallman
American Legislative Exchange Council
214 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Suite 400
Washington, D C 20002
(202) 547-4646

■ Postal Privatization
President's Commission on Privatization
1825 K St., N.W.
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 634-6501

A Stamp of Approval for Privatization

The price of mailing a letter has gone up to a quarter, and the Postal Service has cut back service to save money. Now for the good news: these developments—coming, coincidentally, at the same time as increasing calls for moving postal service into the private sector—may be the best advertisement yet for postal privatization.

Although the report of the President's Commission on Privatization, released on March 18, could have gone much further, it did call for repeal of the private express statutes, which give the USPS a monopoly on first- and third-class mail. The report also advocated deregulation of postal boxes, increased contracting-out of Postal Service functions, and a study of the possibility of selling all or part of the enterprise to its employees.

These proposals are sure to generate strong opposition from postal unions and management alike. Postal Rate Commissioner John Crutcher, a longtime advocate of postal reforms, testified before the commission in January and was followed by union and management representatives. "If I were blindfolded and they didn't otherwise identify themselves," Crutcher told REA-

SON, "I couldn't have told a whit of difference, not one iota of difference, between what the union was saying and what management was saying. They all sing from the same piece of sheet music."

A more plaintive tune emerges from the USPS's biggest customers. A 15-month study by the Mailing List Users and Suppliers Association—the people who bring you "junk mail"—found that 10.9 percent of properly addressed third-class mail is never delivered. Observes Crutcher: "A significant segment of industry is vigorously calling for changes in the private express statutes to allow private carriage of third class mail and to shape up the Postal Service by contracting out segments of its functions....When you have a very significant segment of the mailers demanding change, then management and the Board of Governors at some point are going to have to start listening to what they're saying."

Daniel Oliver, chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, is another longtime booster of postal privatization. He hopes the new postmaster general, Anthony Frank, will be more receptive to the idea than his predecessor, Preston Tisch—with whom Oliver frequently sparred.

"If he treats it as a management problem, he will not be successful, because you cannot manage a monopoly...and make it serve the consumers' needs," Oliver told REASON.

Daniel Oliver: *"You cannot manage a monopoly...and make it serve the consumers' needs."*

Meanwhile, in the printed version of his final State of the Union address, President Reagan promised to recommend, as part of the fiscal 1989 budget, a study of postal privatization. "What matters most is the cost and quality of the service provided, not who provides it," he said, making a pitch for privatization in general. "In addition, there is an important moral consideration—individual liberty would be en-

GLOBALTRENDS

Will Turkey Gobble Up the State?

JERUSALEM—Turkey's Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, reelected to a second term in December, is that country's equivalent of Maggie Thatcher: he's trying to move the country away from 60 years of statist policies.

When first elected in 1983, Ozal promised to move the country toward a free market. As he said to U.S. officials in 1986, "We don't want more aid, we want more trade." That seems to be the new spirit, and it works. Thanks partly to some of Ozal's reforms, which have opened Turkey to an avalanche of outside investments, much lower taxes, and the selling-off of state franchises, Turkey today enjoys the highest rate of growth in the OECD—7.8 percent (although inflation continues to run in the 30-40 percent range).

The state currently controls 263 companies, many of which are losing money. Under a new privatization law, at least 40 state-owned companies will be sold through the stock exchange, to the plants' own workers, and to foreigners. Some 22 companies' shares are already sold in the stock market. But for now there are no plans to sell any of the ancient state-controlled monopolies.

The Turkish-occupied part of Cyprus will also enjoy some liberalization as a result of Ozal's policy at home. Turkey cannot afford to continue subsidizing half the budget of its part of Cyprus—$99 million a year. So Turkey will try to get rid of some of its hold on the economy, which today extends to almost 77 percent of industry and 80 percent of the tourist business (both in very bad shape).

While Turkish Cyprus has 70 percent of the island resources, Greek Cyprus has most of the people and a GNP four times that of the Turkish part (as well as 10 times the tourist business). After 1974, the Greek Cypriots, without any foreign aid or help from the mother country, opened their economy to outside investment and made it one of the few free-market areas in this part of the world. Reality, even in their worst enemy's garden, is incentive enough for the Turks: they hope to do just as well as their neighbors.

—Oded Yinon

Global Roundup

■ *Britain frees waves.* Great Britain plans to end its government monopoly on nationwide radio stations and deregulate local broadcasting. By 1990, three national commercial stations will be able to compete with the BBC; the right to do so for up to eight years will be auctioned to the highest bidders. At the local level, existing pirate stations, which have captured an increasing share of the market with more music and less talk, will be able to apply for one of 300-400 new licenses. Last year, government officials raided illegal stations nearly 400 times.

■ *Radio revolt.* In Greece, meanwhile, the mayor of Athens has started a subversive move to undercut the state's monopoly on broadcasting. His year-old pirate radio station, set up in a loft in city hall, provides such a contrast to the government's highly controlled programming on official radio and TV networks that it's drawing 63 percent of the capital's audience. The conservative mayor's successful formula—balanced news reports and commentaries from a range of viewpoints—is now being copied in several other cities, to the chagrin of the Socialist government.

hanced and the debilitating effect of public sector growth on human freedom would be reduced."

Time to Relax the Capital Gains Tax?

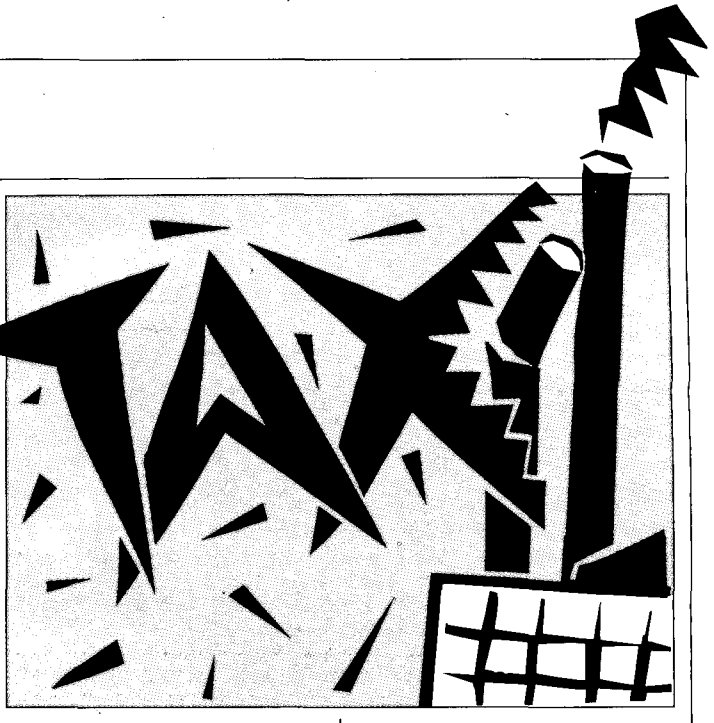
Congress spends a lot of time shooting itself in the foot—like when it raised the capital gains tax in 1986. While complaining about the United States' lack of competitiveness in the global economy, our representatives increased a tax that directly hinders firms' ability to compete. Recently, however, a bipartisan group of legislators, along with President Reagan and Republican presidential candidate George Bush, say they want to take an ax to this tax.

Capital gains—increases in the value of assets such as stocks—are popular tax targets, largely because people think the tax is a good way to soak the rich. But by lowering the anticipated earnings from investments and thereby discouraging people from investing, the tax makes it harder for companies to raise the capital to innovate and expand and thus to effectively compete abroad.

The electronics industry is a case in point. Congress doubled the capital gains tax in 1968-69, causing "a precipitous drop in the formation of high-technology companies," wrote Michael S. Malone recently in a *Wall Street Journal* opinion-page article. U.S. firms were subsequently unable to meet the explosive demand for computers and video games in the early '70s, allowing the Japanese to dominate the market. Not until 1978-80 did Congress bring the rate down to 20 percent, and soon there was an explosion of new firms that "have generated thousands of patents, employed and trained tens of thousands of people, and made electronics the largest manufacturing employer in the U.S." But in 1986 Congress again raised the rate.

Nearly every other industrialized country lets people gain more from investing in their economies. At 33 percent, the United States has the highest maximum long-term capital gains tax. By contrast, the powerhouses of the Pacific Rim—Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia—as well as Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands, have *no* capital gains tax, and West Germany taxes only short-term gains.

The irony is that a high capital gains tax doesn't even achieve the objective of its proponents—making "the rich" pay more. When the rate doubled in 1968-69, notes a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, "revenues plummeted. Five years later they were still below their 1969 levels." Conversely, when the rate was cut from 49 to 28 percent in 1978, revenues from capital gains surged from $8.1 billion to $11.7 billion, and "the bulk of those new revenues was paid by the rich," commented the *Journal*. Research by Harvard University's Larry Lindsey predicts a similar result if the tax is again lowered.



Congress is listening. Twenty-nine bills have been introduced to cut the tax. According to the *Journal*, at least five Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee want to slash the rate from 28 percent to 15 percent. As economist Paul Craig Roberts recently observed, many members of Congress now "believe that the high tax rate is hurting U.S. investment, competitiveness and the value of the dollar, and they are prepared to do something about it."

Out of the Mouths of...

Robert S. Wolff, astrophysicist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, on the billions spent on space exploration. Scientists get around to looking at only 10 percent of the data sent back—and they analyze closely a mere 1 percent:

"What are we doing spending all sorts of money on new equipment to produce this data when we have no way of handling it?"

A foreman on a Soviet cotton farm who increased his earnings last year under the new incentive system but complained to Izvestia *about rationed consumer goods:*

"Why should I, working 5 times, 10 times better than many people—why should I live like everyone else? Why make the effort?"

Chen Bingliang, winning bidder for the Home Cooking Shrimp Restaurant in Xiamen, China, under the government's program of auctioning off state enterprises. Asked if he is a capitalist, the 57-year-old entrepreneur's reply came with "a hearty laugh":

"Let's just say you could call me a red capitalist."

No Shortage of Resourcefulness

Fifteen years ago, the Club of Rome made the frightening prediction that the world would run out of major resources. Luckily, this group of prominent scientists and academics made a big mistake: they grossly underestimated technological progress. A recent article in *Technology Review* shows just how wrong they were.

Limits to Growth, a study commissioned by the club, projected that by the year 2000, the demand for major global resources would increase by five to ten times. Before Third World countries could develop the technologies to control their own futures, warned the study, the resources would run out.

But what's actually happening, according to *Technology*

LAURA MAIN

Review, is the reverse. "As the United States, Japan, and Europe develop new materials and adopt conservation-minded production methods, declining demand for mineral resources—not depletion—is threatening Third World economies."

Manufacturers have replaced raw materials with high-tech ones. Alloys, plastics, and resin-based composites, for example, are replacing metal in autos, meaning the average car will be 26 percent lighter in 1990 than it was in 1980. Five-hundred-pound satellites now do the work of 150,000-ton transoceanic telephone cables. Beverage-can makers are able to manufacture 7,000 more cans per ton of metal than they could a decade ago.

Recycling, too, has helped stretch the world's supply of resources. "In 1985," says *Technology Review*, "recycling provided the West with 48 percent of its lead, 38 percent of its copper, 25 percent of its alumninum, 24 percent of its zinc, and 21 percent of its tin."

The United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development recently cited several studies predicting that by the year 2000, the world will consume only two to three times the volume of raw materials it consumed in 1975. "That is still high," points out *Technology Review*, "but far below the *Limits to Growth* estimates and low enough to delay the depletion of resources significantly."

The increasingly efficient use of scarce resources could hurt countries that rely on the export of such resources, but many developing nations are already working on ways to adapt to new technologies. At any rate, it's good to know the doomsayers aren't always right.

Milestones

■ *Wrestling free.* The Ways and Means Committee of the California State Assembly has voted to end state licensing for professional wrestlers and their agents, as well as wrestling referees, "whose main job," according to bill sponsor Richard Floyd, "is to never see the bad guy do bad things."

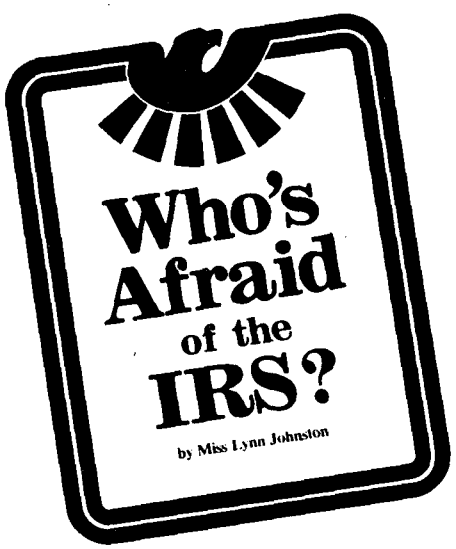
■ *Mighty decent of them.* Action for Children's Television is heading a coalition of groups opposed to the FCC's new restrictions on "indecent" programming. Says ACTV's Peggy Charren, a sometime fan of government action against TV programming (see "Toys Will Be Toys," REASON, July 1987): "Violating freedom of speech isn't the way to protect children in this country. It's like burning books in a library."

■ *An eye-opener.* The Federal Trade Commission has voted to overturn state restrictions on optometrists. Under a regulation now being drafted by the FTC, optometrists will be able to open branch offices, use trade names, and operate in shopping malls. The American Optometric Association objected.

■ *At the movies.* Angelika Films has acquired worldwide distribution rights for a 1942 film version of Ayn Rand's novel *We the Living*. The Italian film, originally banned by Benito Mussolini, will be distributed with English subtitles.

—Robert W. Poole, Jr., Lucy Braun, Virginia I. Postrel, and James Taranto

FACE THE IRS — AND WIN!



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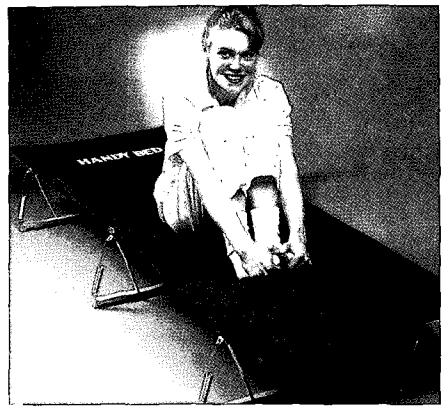

It's almost like pulling an extra bed out of a hat. Unlike most spare beds that gobble up storage space and are unwieldy to move, this one rolls down to fit a 36"-long, 3"-diameter canvas case, to stash in a closet corner, car trunk, camper, anywhere. Yet it unrolls in minutes to a full-size 27" x 73" bed that will even accommodate 6-footers, supports up to 500 pounds and is comfortable to boot. The secret's in the inventive construction: a cotton canvas sling is supported on laminated steel legs with 6 steel springs for cushioning and stability on rough ground. Toss the carrying strap over your shoulder and go — camping, beach, poolside; the 10" legs keep it off damp ground and sand. Of course, this bed is indispensable at home, country home, dorm — even for kids in motel rooms. A superb value at **$49.00** ($5.95) #A1745.

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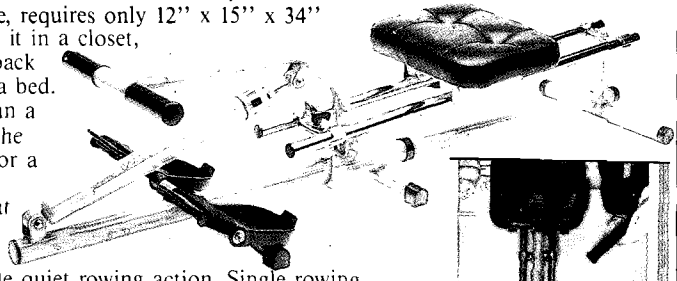

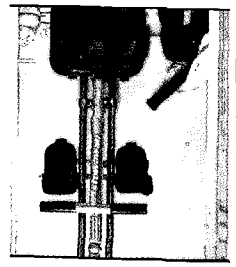

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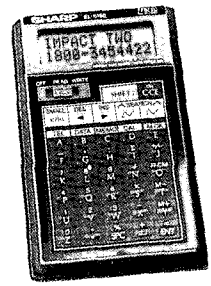

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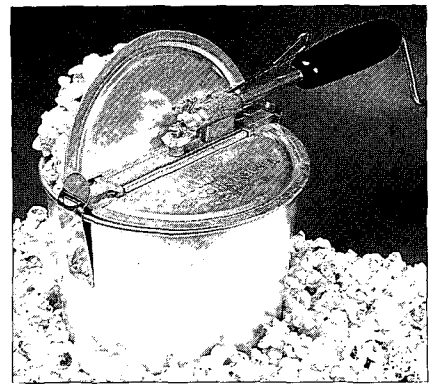

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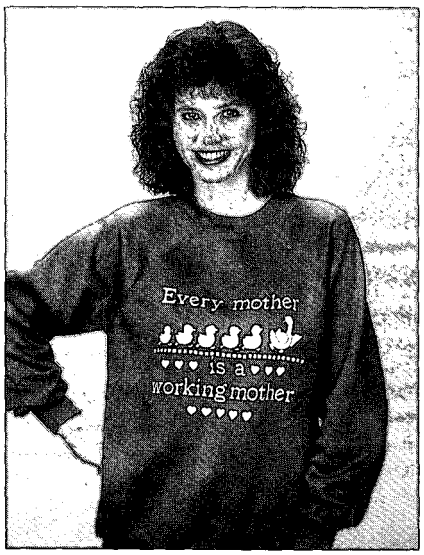

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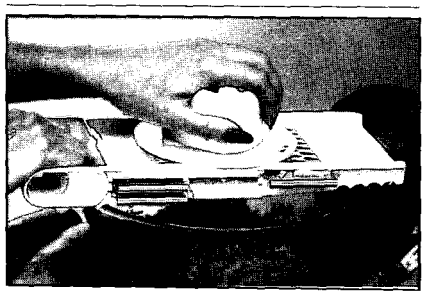

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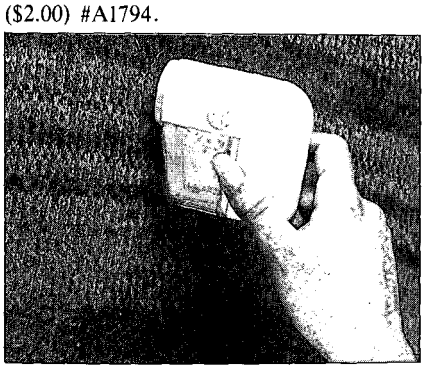

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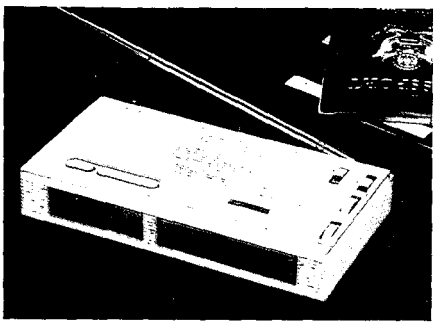

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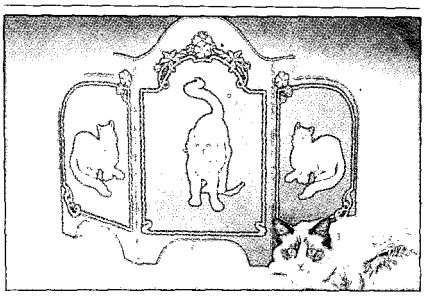

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All the Hungry People

HOW MANY MILLIONS MORE WILL DIE OF HUNGER BEFORE THE WORLD WAKES UP TO THE POLITICS OF FAMINE?

Blight, descending insects, immoderate weather, and soil exhaustion have held man at their mercy for nearly all of his history. By one estimate, there have been 750 major famines since the beginnings of civilization 6,000 years ago. At an average of every eight years, significant numbers of people have lost their lives to the most basic of the primeval "fates"—a failed harvest.

But one of the remarkable facts of modernity is that those kinds of environmental vagaries no longer need threaten life. Humans have developed a whole range of hybrid seeds, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and planting and tilling techniques to avoid catastrophic crop failure. They have learned to irrigate and rechannel water. They have discovered how to conserve soil and rotate crops. These things can be done in either an expensive, technology-intensive way or in a cheap, labor-intensive fashion; they are by no means the province merely of the rich nations. And, of course, for the worst cases, man has developed a whole series of storage, communication, and transport mechanisms so that when disaster does strike, outside relief can prevent starvation.

By these various means, most of the peoples of the world keep nutritional want well at bay. But in some places, efficient and dependable methods for producing and distributing food have not taken hold. In almost all cases today, the reason can be traced to one root: politics. The heavy hand of the state is prominent in nearly every famine of the last 50 years.

In some instances, despots employ starvation directly, as a decapitating weapon of political struggle. Other times, feeding the citizenry is subordinated to ideological ends. And in still other cases, bureaucratic centralism and foolish economic policies slowly strangle food production.

The worst starvation calamities of recent times combine all of these errors.

BY *Karl Zinsmeister*

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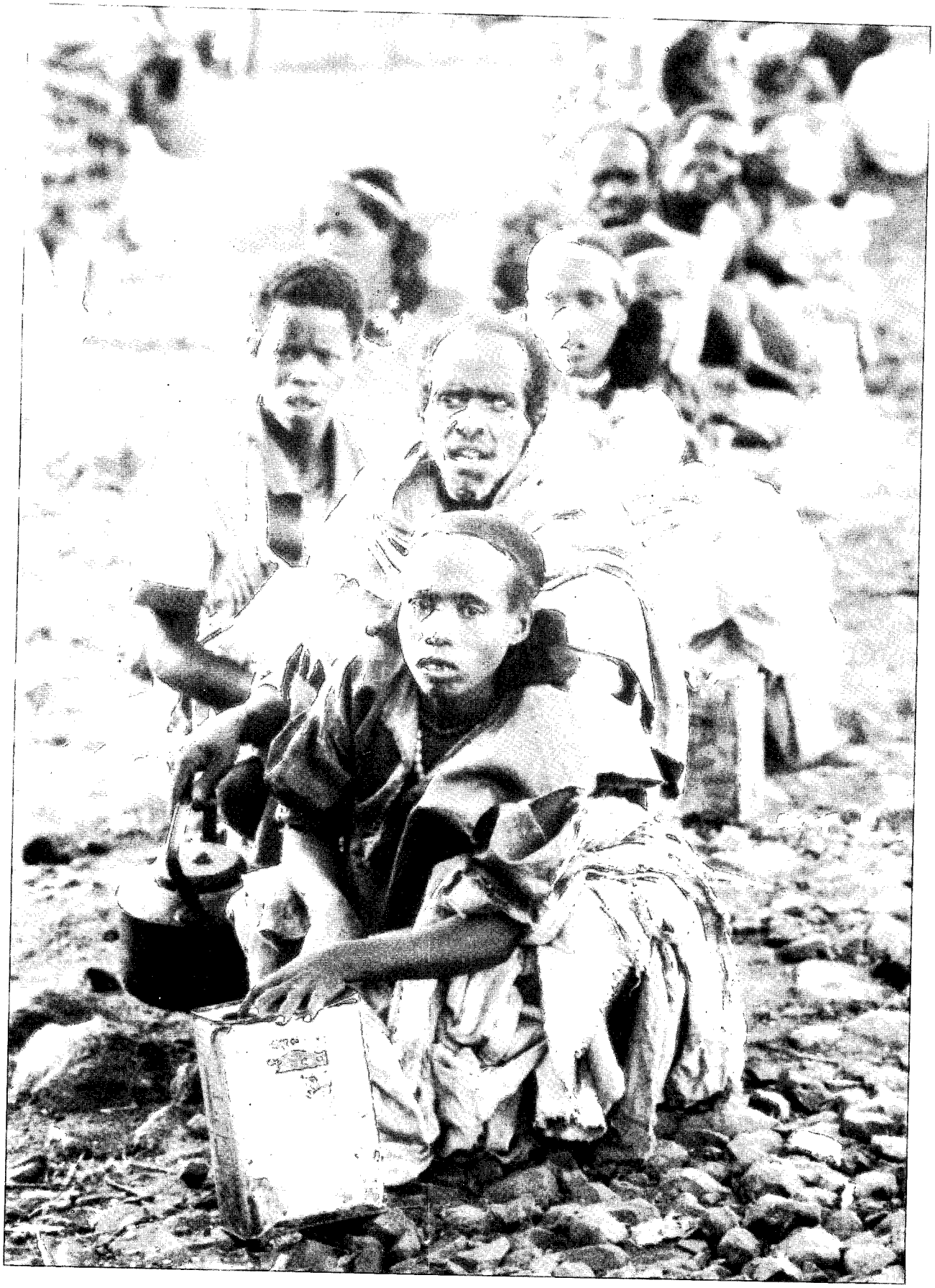


The deaths were needless, entirely avoidable. The Ethiopian famine was largely man-made.

Their results show how terrifyingly high the stakes can be:

Soviet Union *1930-33*	10-15 million dead
China *1960-61*	25-30 million dead
Nigeria (Biafra) *1967-69*	1 million dead
Cambodia *1975-1980*	2 million dead
Ethiopia *1984-85*	1 million dead

The most recent cataclysm took place just three years ago, when more than a million Africans, most of them Ethiopians, perished in quiet misery on that continent's tortured grasslands. Yet despite an avalanche of attention and concern, most of the world failed to recognize the simplest truth about the Ethiopian famine: the deaths were needless, entirely avoidable. The famine was largely man-made.

And here's an even sadder fact: because we have failed to understand the political roots of contemporary hunger, because we are blind to the brutal patterns of recurrence, because we refuse to read aloud the signature on modern-day famine's calling card, it will continue to return. Even at this moment, hard on the heels of an outpouring of global outrage and assistance, Ethiopia is once again starving. At least 6 million Ethiopians are at risk. As appeals go out for 1.3 million tons of Western food donations, Americans are asking, How can this happen again so soon? The answer, missed by most of the famine reporting, lies very near the surface of recent Ethiopian history.

In June of 1974, a group of military officers known as the Dergue toppled Ethiopia's long-ruling Emperor Haile Selassie. Moderates were quickly purged from the regime, and following a climatic bloody gunbattle at junta headquarters, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as ruler. In one of his first acts, he smothered the elderly emperor with a pillow.

Later, in 1975, Mengistu nationalized all land. At first, peasants gleefully seized plots from former landlords. But they soon learned that rather than being made owners, they were about to be collectivized. Peasant unrest resulted. This combined with student protests, a revival of

several festering secessionist movements, and finally a Somali invasion. The new regime was soon teetering.

Then in 1977, following a U.S. rebuff, the Soviet Union delivered a billion dollars' worth of arms to Mengistu, allowing him to defeat the Somalis, check the various resistance groups, and consolidate his power. In the 10 years since, the Soviets have continued to pour weapons in at the rate of half a billion dollars' worth a year. With about 300,000 troops, 2,000 Soviet military advisors, and 7,000 Cuban fighters in the capital and along the Somali border, the Ethiopian military is now the largest and best equipped in black Africa.

In exchange for rescuing the Dergue, the Soviet Union and Cuba began pushing them for "greater Marxist orthodoxy" in their revolution. With the assistance of East German secret police, Mengistu launched a purge of opponents—beginning at the University of Addis Ababa, a hotbed of resistance. More than 3,500 students (out of 5,000) were killed. And, starting in 1979, the collectivization program, announced four years earlier, began to be enforced against recalcitrant peasants.

Most family farmers were forced into collectives where, in classically Stalinist fashion, almost everything produced belonged to the government. Large plantations that had been expropriated were run as state farms, with laborers paid a subsistence wage. Those few independent farmers who remained were allowed to sell their surplus crops only to the government, and at government-dictated prices that were below the cost of production. Private markets in food were closed down down, and as *The Economist* reported, Ethiopians were shot for "hoarding" (storing grain between harvests) and "profiteering" (shipping grain to places without food).

In the face of such measures, all incentives for rural dwellers to labor over their crops disappeared. Not surprisingly, production of teff, Ethiopia's main food grain, fell by 60 percent from 1975 to 1982. Cattle herds were slaughtered or sold across the borders. Reserves that might have forestalled famine evaporated. Three million Ethiopians—8 or 9 percent of the population—fled the country.

At the same time that socialist bungling was stultifying the agricultural economy, two other programs were creating mass hunger in a different way. The first is the so-called villagization scheme. In a typical operation, government troops arrive in an agricultural hamlet, arrest the traditional chiefs, requisition all private property (crops, livestock, tools), then force the locals to break down their huts. They are then force-marched, carrying pieces of their houses on their backs, to a new central location. There, they are required to set up new homes along with other groups who have been similarly gathered. The old sites are bulldozed.

In this way, over 4 million Oromos from eastern Ethiopia, for instance, have recently been uprooted. By the mid-1990s, the government hopes to have relocated nearly all of Ethiopia's 30 million rural dwellers. Very often, villagers resist the move, and they are met with violence, beatings, rapes, and death. The central location to which the peasants are transported often lacks adequate water supplies and is usually far removed from old fields. Much previously cultivated land is neglected and abandoned as a result.

Ethiopia's government has its reasons, of course, to compel these bizarre relocations. For one, it is the simplest way to enforce the farming collectivization that peasants resisted so fiercely so long as they had access to their own lands. Dr. Myles Harris, an Ethiopian relief worker, has reported that unless their parents have proper papers from the local village and "farmer's association," even dying children can be refused admission to hospitals. Centralized dwelling also allows for easier indoctrination and surveillance than when farmers are strung across the countryside. Each new "village" comes equipped with a guard tower and party banners, if little else.

More generally, the villagization program breaks down traditional sources of authority that compete with state power. For instance, in Emperor Selassie's day there were 20,000 separate parishes of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and all villages with 100 people or more had a church. These rural churches, and many mosques in Moslem areas, are being systematically razed. No replacements are allowed in the new villages.

A slightly different program with similar results is the resettlement campaign. During 1984 and 1985, 600,000 residents of the rebellious, guerrilla-harboring northern provinces were resettled to the south. The practice was uncovered when journalists who were in the country to report on the famine noticed people being jammed into trucks and stripped-down Antonov air transports and then whisked away.

This resettlement typically took place amid much brutality. A major investigation by the nonpolitical anthropological organization Cultural Survival found that 40 percent of the relocated tribesmen were beaten, 85 percent were permanently separated from a member of their immediate family, and 60 percent saw people die or be killed in the course of the resettlement. The Cultural Survival research corroborates a later estimate by the French relief organization Médicins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) that fully 1 out of 6 of the Ethiopians who were forcibly relocated died in the process—a total of more than 100,000 individuals. For many Ethiopians, journalist Robert D. Kaplan and other witnesses report, the first experience of hunger did not come until *after* villagization or resettlement.

Following international outcry, the resettlement program was suspended in early 1986. But it apparently restarted last November, and the government has announced that it aims to resettle 300,000 persons this year. On February 8, at a food distribution center in Korem, government troops fired on thousands of unarmed peasants who were in the process of being resettled. Twenty of the resisters were killed, and scores wounded.

This incident illustrates one of the dilemmas of current famine relief programs. Initially, the Dergue resisted Western efforts to establish food stations in the northern, rebel-controlled provinces, even though they were among Ethiopia's hungriest areas. Indeed, as Kaplan, who has written extensively on the famine, reports: "For years Soviet MiG fighter jets have taken off from government bases and bombed anything that moved in guerrilla areas, including food convoys."

When the United States began channelling aid to the northern provinces across the Sudanese border, however, Mengistu changed tactics. In 1985, he agreed to cooperate with the Red Cross and other relief groups to establish food depots in northern garrison towns. The effect, he realized, would be to lure people from the resistance-dominated countryside to central camps, where they

could be registered and controlled.

Correspondent Jonathan Tucker has written in *The Nation* that "since all able-bodied young men from the rebel-held areas are considered potential guerrilla recruits, they have been conscripted into the Ethiopian Army or forcibly resettled in distant parts of the country." In other words, food aid is being used as bait for the regime's resettlement trap.

Tucker quotes a Western relief worker in Ethiopia who states that "the program is admittedly saving some lives, but by contributing to conscription and resettlement, it's also causing additional casualties. In a sense, the program offers logistical backup to Ethiopia's military campaigns."

Apparently because they have come to similar conclusions, rebel groups last fall began attacking food convoys headed north, destroying hundred of tons of grain in several cases, to Western outcry. The Eritrean and Tigre People's Liberation Fronts (both of which are themselves dubious Marxist-controlled groups, like most of Ethiopia's resistance movements) have claimed that food convoys are often used as a screen for the transportation of war matériel. They have declared that the government must rescind its resettlement policy before they will once again guarantee the safety of food convoys on rebel territory.

Mengistu claims the villagization and resettlement programs are merely responses to famine, a way to relieve human pressure in the dry districts. But most observers agree their primary aims are political—to consolidate central government control, enforce collectivization, and deprive rebels of popular support. The relocation campaigns "are ways of dominating and regimenting society, putting people in one place and controlling them," says Dawit Wolde Giorgis, Ethiopian commissioner for relief and rehabilitation until he defected to the West two years ago. In the process, they have become a primary cause of Ethiopian starvation.

The 1984-85 famine was clearly manipulated—some investigators even say engineered—by Mengistu as an instrument of genocide. Even through the height of the dying period, the army and air force were destroying granaries and farms, commandeering relief vehicles, and seizing Western grain shipments. At least half of the 1984-85 victims resided in areas controlled by either Eritrean or Tigrean guerrillas. Many of the other victims were economically independent peasants whom Mengistu, echoing Stalin, bitterly denounced as *kulaks*. In the early stages of the famine, before it was "discovered" by BBC television, Mengistu not only failed to get help, he actually concealed the problem from relief agencies.

The primitive Stalinism that caused the Ethiopian famine was a macabre throwback to the original Soviet model. In 1929 the Bolshevik Revolution was little more than a decade old and Josef Stalin was still solidifying his control of the world's first—at that time, only—Communist state. Most of the peasant farmers who made up the bulk of the Soviet populace had until then been able to resist major changes in the rhythm of their daily lives. Many of the traditional patterns of tillage and husbandry, worship in the village church, and communal and social life continued as they had for generations.

But late that year, Stalin ordered the collectivization of Soviet agriculture. Tens of millions of small landholders were dispossessed of their plots and forced back into communal servitude for the first time since the great Serf Emancipation of 1861. Only this time they were indentured to the Communist Party rather than a landlord, and this time they were organized for political, not economic, purposes. All tools, farm animals, and even personal food stocks were seized, and all future agricultural production was declared property of the state. Naturally, food output collapsed.

Seeing an opportunity, Stalin combined the collectivization of agriculture with a campaign to liquidate "enemies of the revolution." These were defined to include the more prosperous peasants (*kulaks*) as well as members of certain other groups that Stalin found threatening—particularly the troublesome Ukrainians, the anti-Soviet Cossacks of the Northern Caucasus, and the Kazakh nomads. The result was a violent disruption of rural life throughout the Soviet Union, the destruction of agriculture in what had been Europe's breadbasket, and the death—in total absence of any natural disaster—of 10 to 15 million people, mostly by famine and forced labor.

Authorities carried out a vigorous campaign of grain confiscation even at the height of the famine. "Bread Procurement Commissions" probed barnyards and thatched roofs with thin sticks, searching for and seizing any private grain stores. The starving were bodily prevented from leaving the famine zones and were transported back if they were discovered in cities or in adjoining (nonstarving) provinces. News of the famine was suppressed, and when it trickled out nonetheless, offers of food aid from foreign nations were refused by Soviet leaders.

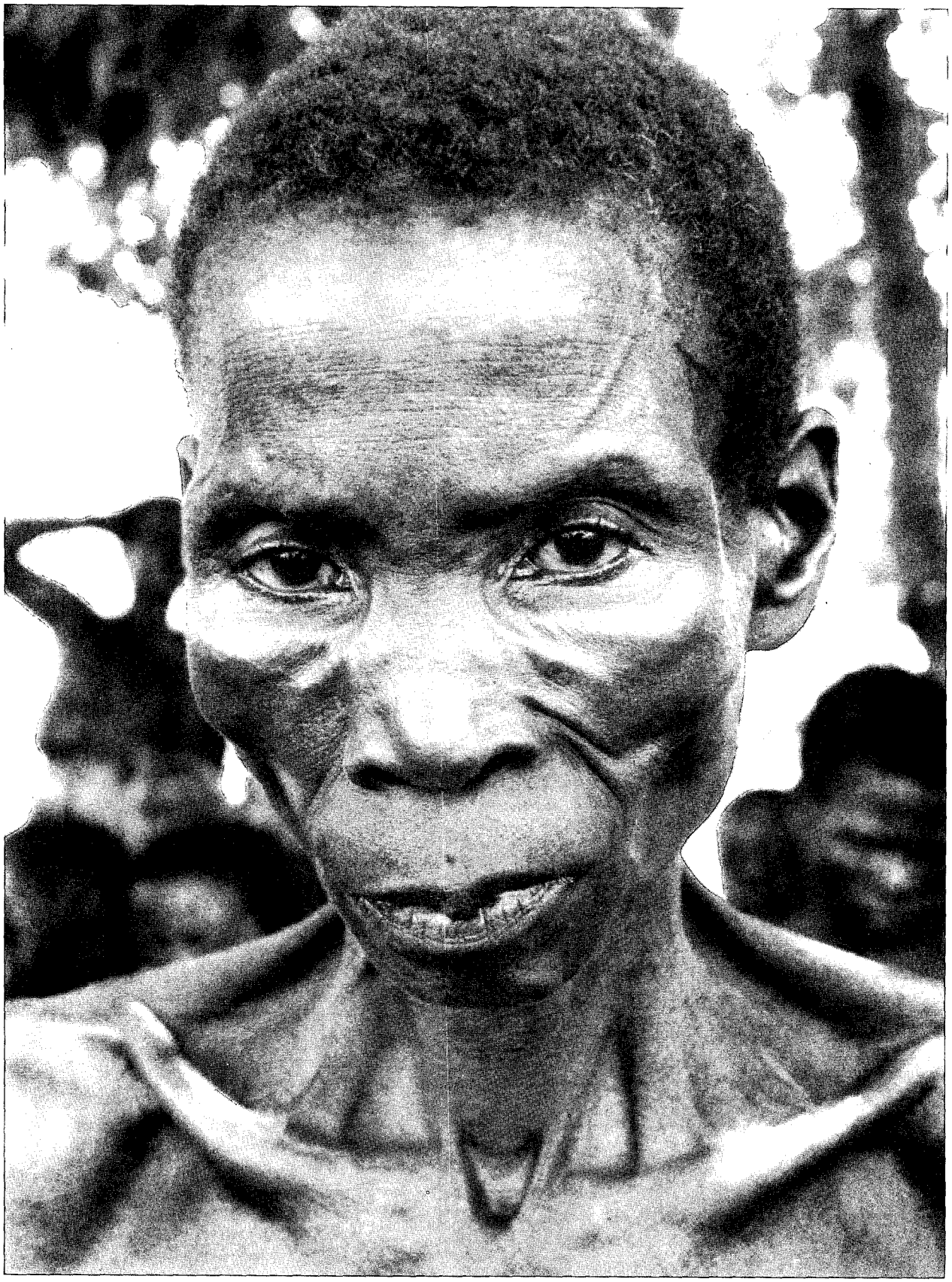
The famine was one part state pogrom, one part a failure to understand economic incentives, and one part a product of central-planning idiocy (the entire staff of the state meteorological office was arrested and charged with false weather forecasts at one point). In all cases, however, the direct responsibility of the Communist government is clear.

If there was a lesson in the Soviets' collectivization famine, it was lost on their socialist brothers in China. One year after gaining power in 1949, China's Communist rulers confiscated all land from anyone who owned five acres or more and distributed it among poorer farmers. Between 16 million and 28 million landowners are believed to have been slaughtered in the process.

The confiscations were barely completed when a new program was unveiled. Lands continued to be privately owned, but they were grouped into agricultural cooperatives. Ten million existed by 1954. At the end of 1956 these were further centralized into 700,000 collective farms, containing almost all agricultural families.

Over the next two years, the remaining private ownership of land was ended, and when Mao's Great Leap Forward began in 1958, the 700,000 collective farms were grouped into 25,000 communes. Farmers became simple wage earners. Not only all work but also eating, raising children, and other private functions were made communal. Social control by the central government was virtually complete. Personal incentives for food production disappeared.

At the end of the 1950s, China's annual grain production had totaled 270 million metric tons. In 1960, one year after the Great Leap, the figure is estimated to have fallen to 150 million tons. It did not exceed that level for a decade and did not exceed pre-collectivization levels until very recently. As one might expect,



Most of the nations of Africa are in the grip of ideological forces which, while less nefarious than those operating in China or Ethiopia or the Soviet Union, also have deadly effects.

there was catastrophic famine in China during 1960-61. Based on census data, it is now calculated that an incredible 25-30 million people died of government-inflicted hunger in a two- or three-year period.

The similarities of the Great Leap Forward disaster and Stalin's collectivization famine are manifold. At root, both were caused by a determination to subordinate even life-sustaining production to political goals. While insecure cynicism animated the Soviets, the Chinese were driven by revolutionary utopianism. The results, however, were every bit as deadly. And the damage was tragically long-lasting. Even through the 1970s, famine remained a common part of life in much of rural China, despite official and academic propaganda to the contrary. (See Steven W. Mosher, *Journey to the Forbidden China.*)

Not until the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and early '80s—where most peasant households were given a small plot of private land, some choice about what to grow, and the partial right to sell products in free markets—did Chinese farming begin to recover. From 1978 (when the reforms began) to 1984, Chinese grain production rose 34 percent, to a record 405 million tons. China actually became a small grain exporter.

But grain output has levelled off and today China once again faces serious shortages of cereals, as well as other foodstuffs. Apparently, the modest liberalizations undertaken up to now have imparted as much kick as they can. Part of the problem is that grain, whose price the government strictly controls to placate urban consumers, is now unprofitable compared to vegetables, herbs, and medicinal plants, which can be sold on free markets. China's farmers have developed a powerful taste for entrepreneurial incentives, and it is unlikely that food production can be raised significantly again unless China's leaders are willing to risk more market-based reforms.

News of the 1960-61 famine was suppressed so completely that only recently did the world learn of its existence. And not until the last few years, when outside observers gained access to new demographic data, did the catastrophic scale of the loss become clear. That 25 million famine deaths could, first, occur, and then be kept secret from the rest of the world, has important political implications, as Indian scholar Amartya Sen observed in *The New York Review of Books*:

"In India even a fraction of that death toll would have immediately caused a storm in the newspapers and a turmoil in the Indian parliament, and the ruling government would almost certainly have had to resign. Any government keen on staying in power would have had to avoid such starvation deaths from taking place at any cost. Thus the question of food and starvation is not unrelated to the issue of liberties, of newspapers, and ultimately, of democracy."

"In India even a fraction of China's death toll would have...caused a storm in the newspapers.... Starvation is not unrelated to the issue of liberties, of newspapers, and ultimately, of democracy."

A look at the worldwide famines since 1960-61 bears out the accuracy of this observation. In 1968 famine was induced in Nigeria as part of the Biafran war. The (non-Communist) Nigerian military government destroyed and poisoned food supplies, blocked relief, and wielded starvation as a weapon. The Biafran rebel government also interfered with aid efforts. A political famine was created, and up to a million perished.

Less than a decade later, after Cambodia's fall in 1975, Pol Pot's doctrinaire Communists inaugurated a homicidal regimen of "re-education" and "mobilization" throughout the nation. Residents of Phnom Penh and other cities were forcibly relocated to undeveloped parts of the countryside. The predictable pattern of confiscations, collectivizations, and purges wracked the agricultural economy. Starvation was soon rampant. Two million of Cambodia's eight million citizens died in subsequent months, many of starvation.

Not long afterward came Afghanistan. Since the Soviet invasion, Soviet and Afghan government troops have waged war not merely on the *mujaheddin* guerrillas but, as a Helsinki Watch report puts it, "on every element of the food production system." They have poisoned wells and destroyed irrigation systems. They have cut down fruit trees and strafed cattle and domestic animals. Grain has been burned in fields and storage facilities with phosphorous bombs. Gardens and terraces are bomb-cratered and mined.

Wheat berries brought in from Pakistan have at times been the only nourishment for many Afghans, and British studies suggest 20 percent of all children in northern provinces suffer from serious malnutrition. Of course, the government forbids the International Red Cross from distributing aid in the countryside. Though no official death totals are available, the London-based group Afghan Aid estimates that half a million or more Afghans have been threatened with starvation at various times in recent years. Those who have avoided such a fate did so primarily by leaving the country, surrendering to the process that has made one out of every two refugees in the world today an Afghan.

In Mozambique—a country blessed with rich agricultural lands and large mineral and energy deposits but cursed with a hapless government—famine killed 100,000 people in the early 1980s. Six million more currently face starvation, according to the United Nations.

From the time the Portuguese left in 1974 until the early 1980s, the Mozambican government controlled food prices and directed all agricultural investment to large state farms. Peasant and private commercial farmers had their supplies of seed, tools, fertilizer, and animal feed cut off. Today, idle tractors, trucks, and pumps litter the countryside, immobilized by parts and fuel shortages. Hoes, axes, seeds, and fertilizer are difficult to find. "People want to produce, but they need tools," says a CARE worker.

The government has brought such suffering to the country that a resistance movement has been able to put 10,000 guerrillas in the field and retain a measure of public sympathy, despite its own

lack of ideological coherence and a record of frequent brutality, including destruction of food convoys.

Having failed to identify even some of the most egregious famines as the cruel and avoidable events they are, the world, not surprisingly, is often blind to the more subtle forms of political hunger. Most of the nations of Africa, and some other parts of the Third World as well, are currently in the grip of ideological forces which, while less nefarious than those operating in China or Ethiopia or the Soviet Union, also have deadly effects.

In many developing countries, governments have so stultified their rural economies that they are unable to produce anything efficiently. This is often a bipartite process. On the one hand, government functions such as the maintenance of roads and infrastructure and the disbursement of technical assistance are neglected. And on the other, a whole series of taxes, tariffs, marketing orders, subsidies, and regulations distort prices and prevent markets from operating effectively. The result is slow-motion misery.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the problem is to contrast the experiences of Kenya—one of Africa's rare success stories—with those of Tanzania—a quintessential failure. The two nations have a common border and are climatically and topographically similar, with Tanzania enjoying greater resources. Kenya and Tanzania share several common ethnic populations, and their precolonial and colonial histories were closely intertwined.

But upon independence, Kenya and Tanzania took widely divergent political paths. Under Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya explicitly rejected large-scale nationalization and confiscation of private property. The national slogan became "Harambee" ("self-help"), and private ownership and industry were strongly encouraged. Individual enterprise was considered each citizen's responsibility and the best way to eliminate poverty. Kenya blundered into some of the destructive policies common in newly independent Africa—for instance, persecution and expulsion of the Asian immigrants who are Africa's leading agents of modernization. But the overall economic program was liberal and strongly market-oriented.

In Tanzania, on the other hand, Julius Nyerere became a leading advocate of full

It took willful acts of men to turn acts of nature into calamity. Absent a political breakdown, environmental factors do not now cause people to suffer and die from malnutrition.

African socialism. Banks and industry were nationalized, and compulsory government service was introduced. Nyerere's politico-economic philosophy was based on what he called Ujamaa (Familyhood) Socialism—Tanzania would be transformed from a nation of individual peasant producers to a society of small-scale communalists. Here we have a classic shibboleth of political leftists and utopian purifiers. To quote a European proponent: "It [has] not been understood that the reform of farming should begin with the reform of man."

Nyerere was no tyrant, but his socialism led him into a giant villagization scheme, forerunner to the Ethiopian version, that resulted in forced relocation of over 90 percent of the rural population to new central hamlets. Unlike his Ethiopian counterparts, Nyerere seems to have been motivated less by security considerations than by the naive belief that pushing people into large central facilities would make it easier for them to act collectively and speed the arrival of clinics, schools, new wells, and other artifacts of modernism.

In practice, the Ujamaa collectives were a complete flop. The year after they were introduced, Tanzania had to import almost a million tons of grain to stave off famine. Communal farming soon had to be abandoned altogether, and private plots once again allowed, even required. But the damage was done. Villagization had destroyed old physical facilities and social networks without adequately replacing them. It had destroyed the security of private ownership. It had separated farmers from their land. The result was misery, impoverishment, hunger, and death.

The keys to agricultural production, like all production, are structure and incentives. In Kenya, the fertilizer, seed, and farm equipment businesses are all private. The supply of chemicals to farmers is handled partly privately, partly by the government. In Tanzania, the government controls all four critical agricultural inputs—and much less efficiently. In Kenya, Western investment and expertise have been welcomed. In Tanzania, foreign capital was nationalized. In Kenya, as in nearly all of Africa, the government buys up and markets most crops, but it pays farmers a world-market-based price. In Tanzania, prices are set politically, and they have been absurdly low.

Starting from the common, middle ground of tribal ownership, Kenya privatized landholding, Tanzania collectivized it. Kenya kept its currency exchange rates flexible and became an agricultural export powerhouse. Tanzania controlled its currency at high levels to make imports cheap and in the process destroyed its export industries. To support large public expenditures (three-fourths of Tanzania's salaried labor force is employed by the government), Tanzania placed very heavy taxes on farmers and other producers.

Because of its sensible free economy, Kenya is basically self-sufficient in food. When extended drought arrived in the early 1980s, it was much better prepared than Tanzania or most other African states: despite the terrible absence of rain, no deaths due to starvation were recorded in Kenya.

Other parts of the world have done better than Africa. Asian developing nations in particular latched onto Green Revolution techniques with a vengeance and have dramatically increased agricultural yields. India—not long ago considered hopeless, doomed by resource and population factors to rely forever on outside food supplies—is now a food ex-

porter. The grassroots Indian economy is quite free and entrepreneurial; the government operates programs to bring farmers new technology and capital and assist them in setting up markets.

So there is hope, where destructive state meddling can be kept to a minimum. In just the last couple of years, several of the worst offenders, including Tanzania, Mozambique, and recently Ethiopia have either promised or begun market-oriented reforms. Under new president Ali Hassan Mwinyi, the Tanzanians have reduced price controls and strictures on private traders and devalued their currency to encourage agricultural exports. The Mozambicans have downgraded state farms. Several other African nations have acknowledged their almost universal error in neglecting farming (the continent's major "industry") in favor of showy factory and urban projects.

Aside from the desperate economic straits these countries faced, new pro-market pressures from the World Bank and Western governments have been a catalyst for reform. Belatedly, the West is realizing that the only sensible use for its aid (outside of emergencies where the threat to life demands quick action) is as a carrot, or a stick, to induce structural change. Too often in recent decades, easy Western aid to developing countries has merely cemented the existing government in place and underwritten the continuation of anti-economic policies.

Unfortunately, that is what happened in Ethiopia, where more than $2 billion in official aid poured in over a two-year period, the largest portion from the U.S. government. What was most infuriating was the way it was necessary to "beg from the hangman the right to come to the help of the victims," as French political writer Bernard-Henri Levy put it. Mengistu was reportedly willing to let several million people die rather than capitulate on points of principle, so the Red Cross, the U.S. government, and other relief groups had to tiptoe about to avoid offending the Dergue. In the process, they became tacit accomplices in the regime's brutality. Food shipments were reportedly taxed at the rate of $50 a ton to finance the army, and grain was diverted directly to the soldiers as pay. The resettlement and villagization schemes were financed with donated funds and supplies.

The existence of world hunger evokes in many Americans and Europeans not only great sympathy but also a feeling of guilt. As the rich are wont to do, we sometimes try to "buy" ourselves out of this guilt by showering the poor with large amounts of unconditioned financial assistance. From 1970 to the early 1980s, official Western aid to sub-Saharan Africa increased by an average of 5 percent a year in real terms. In some countries, aid per person amounts to a third or more of income per capita, giving new meaning to the term *dependency*. If these nations got into trouble over the last decade and a half, it was for want, not of outside assistance, but of a sensible set of economic rules.

If we wish to help the world's poor, we must keep pushing their governmental masters to allow them more economic liberty. Even small pro-market reforms have already paid big dividends in several hungry countries, such as China. But the measures taken so far have mostly been very limited. No nation has dismantled its government monopoly on agricultural marketing. None has fully decontrolled prices, currencies, or trade restrictions. Few have been very congenial to the small family farmers who are the developing world's potential economic saviors. All retain bloated and intrusive government sectors.

Yet genuine interest in economic freedom is beginning to get a toehold in the Third World. During his 1986 visit to Washington, I asked Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the UNITA guerrilla movement fighting to rid Angola of Soviet and Cuban domination, what he would do in a free Angola to avoid repeating the disastrous economic errors of so many of his African neighbors: The government's role, he answered, is to build roads and create a marketplace, help with technical know-how and investment assistance, and then step back. Only individuals, and individual incentives, Savimbi stated, can create wealth: "When you leave people to work their own farms...they have an incentive to produce—'Then I will get something for myself.' By getting something for himself, he will help his village...his district...his province...his country."

This answer, while commonsensical to Western ears, is dramatically iconoclastic coming from an African leader. If Savimbi's message (and the economic freedom and political democracy that alone can make it happen) eventually takes hold outside the safe sanctuary of American meeting rooms, it could provide a genuine alternative to the two decades of centralization that have strangled Africa's once-mighty productive capabilities.

The alternative is disaster. Ethiopia was once considered a potential granary for Africa. During Selassie's reign, the nation was an agricultural exporter, small farmers prospered, large plantations growing food and cash crops sprang up, an extensive network of private traders and investors took root. But all that was thrown away. And when the latest of Africa's regularly recurring droughts arrived, the destructive policies that were the replacement bore bitter fruit.

Outside observers might have anticipated that, given the recent history of mass starvations. Yet much of the world seems to have fatuously accepted the official claim that the famine and the one million deaths were, as Ethiopia's ambassador to the United Nations puts it, "adversities caused by environmental factors." This stems from deeply rooted contemporary belief that world hunger is primarily a product of natural failures: too little rain, too many people, mysterious "desertification," bad soil, bad luck.

Yet it took willful acts of men to turn acts of nature into calamity. Absent a larger, overriding political breakdown, environmental factors do not now cause people to suffer and die from malnutrition. Zimbabwe, for instance, suffered through the same dry spell but experienced few famine deaths, on account of its strong farm economy based on private ownership. Likewise, India is today in the midst of its worst drought in decades, but few will starve because the country has a regular food surplus, a prosperous network of private farmers and traders, and a good government-assisted distribution system.

Ed Hullander of the U.S. Agency for International Development put the Ethiopian case directly in 1985: "Fifteen years ago when I was in those high plains [in Ethiopia], I saw corn that was the envy of Iowa. You don't see that today. It was the policies that stopped agricultural production, stopped the availability of food per capita, that were the major precipitants of this famine."

Today (and it has been true for most of this century), famine deaths are political, not natural, phenomena. And it is political change that will end and prevent them. R

Karl Zinsmeister is a Washington-based writer and consultant and an adjunct research associate at the American Enterprise Institute.

He built a better egg cracker, and the regulators beat a path to his door.

BREAKING MR. MAYNARD

by James Taranto

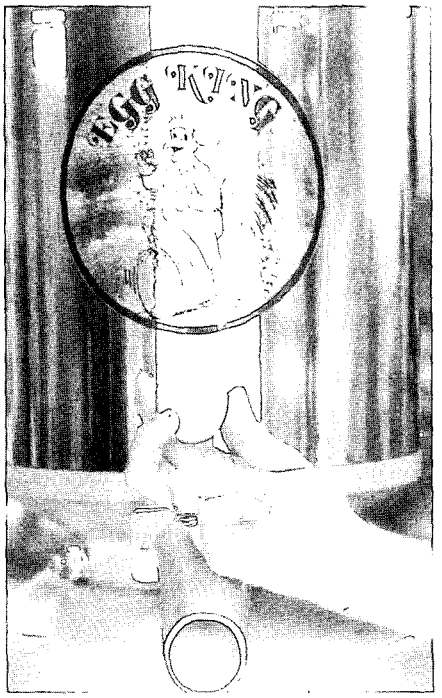
As a baker in the Navy in the 1960s, Mike Maynard broke thousands of eggs. Cracking them by hand was a tedious process, and he figured there had to be a better way.

When Maynard left the military and went into business distributing food-processing equipment, he kept the egg-breaking problem in the back of his mind. "Over the years I played with it here and there," he recalls. Working during his spare time, by 1982 he had completed his brainchild, a machine that can crack 30 dozen eggs in one minute. He began marketing the Egg King.

Five years later, the 45-year-old inventor sits in his office in an industrial section of Santa Ana, California. Puffing on a cigarette, he remembers the elation of his early success—and the frustration that followed.

Bakers, his first customers, were "just absolutely ecstatic," Maynard says, producing a stack of testimonials. A handwritten note from Betty Fedorczyk of Betty's Cakery in East Brunswick, New Jersey, is typical: "Using fresh eggs instead of canned frozen eggs gives a product an extra special touch."

Though Maynard sold the Egg King as baking equipment, he soon discovered



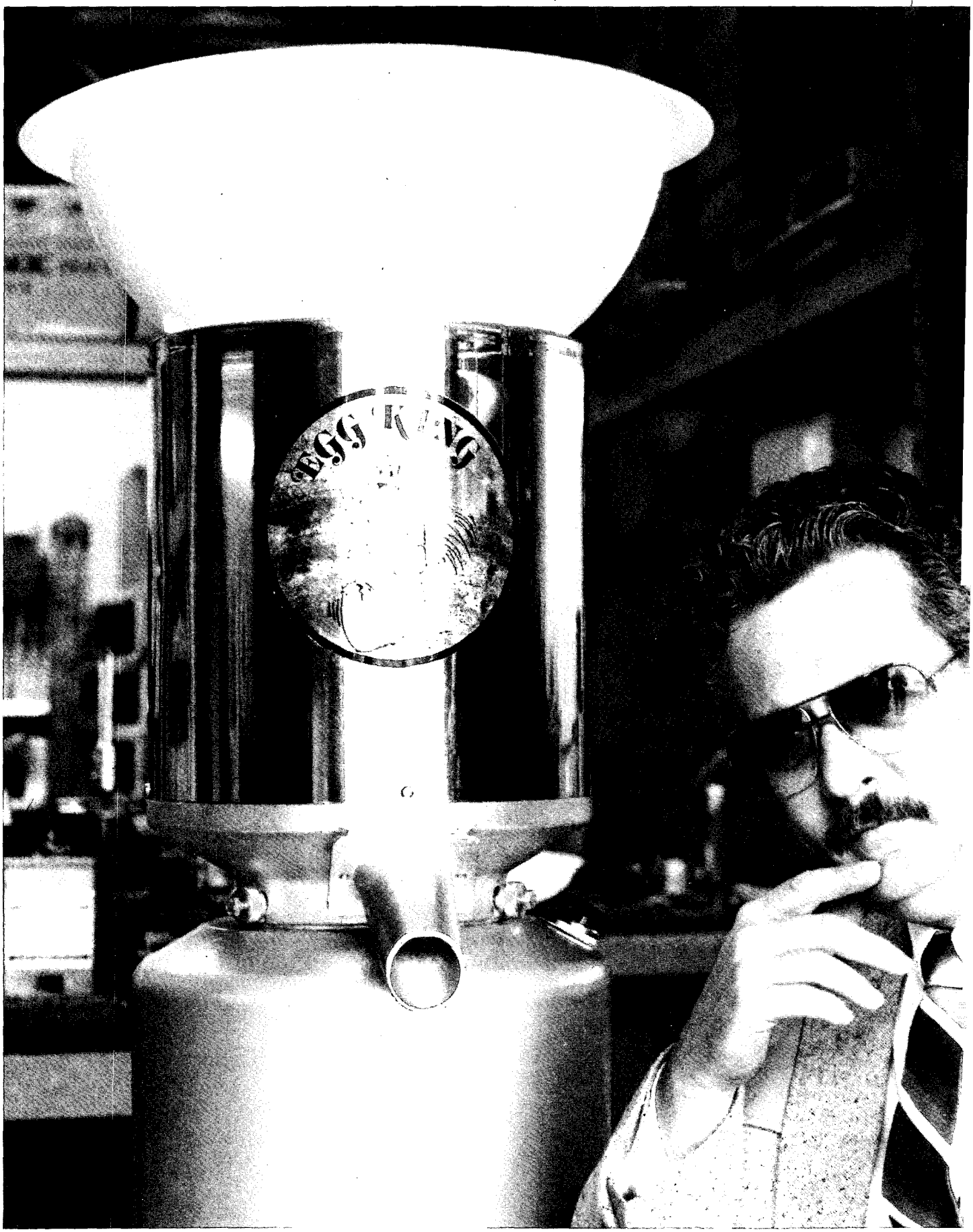
PHOTOGRAPHS - J.P. PLUNIER

that his machine filled a much larger gap in the marketplace than he had imagined. "We started to do trade shows, and it blossomed way beyond the baking industry. The machine is now in everything from hospitals to fast-food restaurants. Colleges, the military. It's aboard ship, it's aboard cruise lines. There's not an area of food service today that you will not find one of these machines in." Maynard's company, MiSa Manufacturing, sold about 50 machines—$120,000 worth—the first year, and by 1984 sales had increased more than fivefold.

Many commercial egg users had turned away from fresh eggs because they couldn't afford to pay workers to break hundreds of eggs. Their alternatives were processed frozen, powdered, and liquid eggs—the real scum of the egg world, according to Egg King supporters.

St. Louis baker Don McArthur's description of frozen eggs is not for the squeamish: "When I remove the lid from a can of frozen eggs and see this red liquid (that I know is blood) floating on top of this curdled mass that resembles orange cottage cheese more than it does eggs, I'm told I must mix this mass well with a whip....This wouldn't be too bad if all you had to do was dip the blood off the top of the orange cottage cheese, but most of the time you can't mix them too well because of the smell and you are in a hurry to get your nose away from the can."

And though frozen eggs are inferior, they can cost nearly twice as much as fresh eggs, which need not go through an expensive preparation process. The Egg King, retailing at $3,700, will pay for itself in savings in a year, Maynard claims, if the machine breaks an average of 30 dozen eggs a day. In a free marketplace, one would expect the Egg King to



Mike Maynard: "It's not a question of whether the Egg King survives or doesn't

rvive, it's a question of right and wrong."

be a smashing success, while Maynard's competitors in the processed-egg industry would lay an egg.

But we don't have a free marketplace, as Maynard soon discovered. We have a marketplace in which a small businessman with a new way of doing things can expect to find a formidable foe in large industries that do things the old way. Fair enough. But we also have a marketplace in which government regulations provide such foes a golden opportunity to squelch upstarts like Maynard.

Maynard's troubles began in 1983 when one of his customers, a pasta plant in St. Louis, sought approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use the machine in its production. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has jurisdiction over equipment in plants that process meat and poultry. It approved the machine after a 120-day field test verified that it met the government's sanitary requirements.

Enter the United Egg Producers, an industry group that represents egg processors and producers. Recognizing the economic threat posed by the Egg King, it started marshaling the force of government against the competition.

First, UEP went to another arm of the USDA, the Agricultural Marketing Service, which regulates the processed egg industry. Soon its bureaucrats were putting pressure on the bureaucrats in the Food Safety division, and in March 1984 Maynard received a letter from Royal Oyster—not a seafood dish but an FSIS bureaucrat—informing him that the earlier approval had been rescinded because federal regulations require eggs to be broken individually and inspected for wholesomeness.

Of course, Oyster cited "the law"—the Egg Products Inspection Act passed in 1971 amid concern about unsanitary practices in the egg industry. The act imposed very stringent restrictions on official egg-breaking plants—the only facilities legally permitted to process undergrade eggs for human consumption. Undergrade eggs require individual inspection so that rotten and other inedible eggs can be removed.

But the act explicitly exempts food-processing plants, restaurants, and bakeries from its inspection requirements, provided they break only eggs of Grade B and above. That's just what the Egg King's instructions specify. Yet the regulations were applied anyway.

"You can't do that," Maynard fumes. "You can't borrow a regulation from the milk industry and use it in the apple industry."

Egg King opponents say they can and should bring this regulation down on Maynard's machine. They say there's a health threat. Though USDA-graded eggs must be sterilized, bacteria embedded deep in the pores of the shell can survive the sterilization process, according to a study by USDA scientist W. A. Moats. And because the Egg King allows eggs to come in contact with shells (it breaks eggs through the centrifugal force of a spinning cylinder and then filters out the shells), the egg producers and their friends at USDA insist that it poses a danger of salmonella poisoning.

Moats himself places little stock in this argument. When Maynard wrote to the scientist asking for clarification of his study, Moats replied: "Bacteria embedded in the shell cannot be dislodged by rinsing the shell surface and for this reason, casual contact of the egg liquid with the shell surface or fragments of shell is unlikely to be a problem." And even if eggs should become contaminated, Egg King users are instructed to break only eggs that will be cooked—and cooking ought to kill any remaining bacteria.

It would not have been so bad that his opponents prevailed—Maynard could no longer say his machine was USDA-approved, and he lost a small segment of his market. But bakeries and restaurants were still free to use the Egg King, and no federal bureaucracy could stop them. The United Egg Producers, however, wouldn't leave it at that.

The UEP's next move was to enlist the aid of Rep. Lindsay Thomas (D-Ga.), whose district includes the UEP's Decatur headquarters. Thomas obligingly tacked onto other legislation an amendment that would have banned the use of centrifugal egg-breaking machines outright—on the grounds that they are a threat to public health. Actually, it would have banned the processing of eggs in *any* way that did not allow examination of the contents of individual eggs—so hard-boiled eggs could have been outlawed!

Maynard found out he was about to be legislated out of business only because Karen Darling, a USDA bureaucrat, tipped

him off. "She doesn't like our system of egg breaking," explains Maynard. "It doesn't seem right to her. But it also didn't seem right to her to outlaw me out of business without telling me about it." Darling, for her part, says she doesn't remember tipping Maynard off and that she still opposes the machine.

By the time Maynard found out about the amendment, Thomas had pushed it through the Agriculture Committee without debate. So Maynard contacted *his* representative, Robert Badham (R-Calif.), who introduced an amendment on the House floor to kill the Thomas amendment. Maynard hired a lobbyist to persuade enough legislators to vote his way, and though he was up against an industry association with its own political action committee, Maynard prevailed. After a sparsely attended 45-minute floor debate in October 1985, the Badham amendment passed by 29 to 20.

Congress wasn't finished with the issue, however. Six weeks later, the House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry held a hearing on...centrifugal egg-breaking machines. Conveniently enough for the UEP, less than a month before the hearing a salmonella outbreak was reported at a hotel in Atlantic City that used an Egg King. Five employees were stricken, and the day before the hearing, Denise Nelson, an Atlantic City health inspector, sent a letter to subcommittee chairman Tony Coelho (D-Calif.) concluding that the Egg King's "implication as a probable cause ...cannot be refuted."

But it was refuted, within a week, by Atlantic City Health Officer James Budd. Noting that inspectors are "not qualified epidemiologically to link the regulatory conditions with disease," Budd said there was "no confirming evidence" that the Egg King caused the alleged outbreak. Indeed, it isn't even clear that an outbreak occurred: of the five people who got sick, Budd told REASON, only one tested positive for salmonella. Of the remaining four, one had eaten no eggs and one had preexisting gastrointestinal problems.

Maynard claims the UEP "coerced the people in Atlantic City to give them the report." Calls to UEP for a response were referred to Fred Frawley, a Lewiston, Maine, attorney representing the group in a lawsuit brought by Maynard. Frawley said depositions had been taken from those involved in the Atlantic City incident, and "there was no testimony that I am aware of that supports what Maynard is saying."

Budd, however, agrees that there was pressure from outside: "Somehow, our staff people were contacted and, quite frankly, I thought that they were used in some way. They jumped to these conclusions and they were persuaded to write this memo to the government committee. I don't know who persuaded them."

Budd's memo was introduced into the record of the subcommittee's hearing, and no further federal action was taken against the Egg King. The UEP didn't relent, however. It has now taken its fight to the state level.

Nebraska is the home of Henningson Foods, one of the nation's largest egg producers and processors. It is also the home of the University of Nebraska, where Dr. Michael Liewen, a professor of food science and technology, conducted a UEP-funded study in 1985 that found high bacterial levels in eggs broken by the Egg King. (The following year, Maynard commissioned a study by Silliker Labs of Carson, California, which found no significant problem with bacterial contamination. An earlier independent study by the Hawaii Health Department had found the same.)

While Liewen was studying the Egg King, the state Department of Agriculture proceeded to ban it. "It is our opinion that we could make a good argument for or against the use of the machine," said an internal memo. But the regulators cavalierly dismissed the import of banning the invention: "Since there is only one machine being utilized in Nebraska (to our knowledge), it seems that our action is not going to have any direct effects to speak of."

Nebraska generously allowed its residents to own Egg Kings for purposes other than breaking eggs—as paperweights or wall decorations, perhaps. The memo stressed that the machine was not being banned, only the "process" of breaking eggs with it. The memo also noted that banning the Egg King "would endear us to the egg industry to some degree," although Denis Blank, one of the memo's authors, denies that this was a factor in the decision. (He could not explain, however, why it was even mentioned in the memo.)

Georgia, UEP's home state, quickly followed Nebraska's lead, as did New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and South Dakota. New Hampshire reversed itself after instituting a ban.

Sales plummeted—from $650,000 in 1984 to only $137,500 in 1987. Would-be customers are understandably reluctant to buy a machine that may soon be outlawed. On the bright side, California decided early this year not to ban the machine, and Maynard hopes this will reverse the trend. So far, he says, 1988 sales are roughly on par with last year's.

The battle against a politically experienced industry group has been a costly one for Maynard. "Every dime of profit the company has ever made has gone into it, plus hundreds of thousands of dollars of my own money," he says wearily. "And all of it because you're fighting an organization that's huge, that's got more money than they know what to do with, and you're digging into their profit."

Maynard has seen MiSa Manufacturing driven into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, after spending close to a million dollars on legal fees, lobbying, and public relations. The company's only remaining asset is a lawsuit against the UEP. Early last year, the suit was thrown out by a U.S. district judge on jurisdictional grounds, but Maynard is appealing in the Ninth Circuit Court. His new company, ADSI, is marketing a modified version of the machine under a different name.

Maynard is tough, persistent, and abrasive—qualities that no doubt help him withstand the frustration of fighting for the right to compete fairly. Many businessmen in his position would just give up, not bothering to continue what may well be a losing battle. Many innovations have no doubt fallen through the cracks of the regulatory bureaucracy where health and safety inevitably become not scientific but political issues, open to special-interest lobbying.

Maynard is bitter, but determined to press on. For him it is a moral issue: "It's not a question of whether the Egg King survives or doesn't survive, it's a question of right and wrong. Where do we live? Do we live in the Soviet Union or do we live in the United States? Here you're innocent until proven guilty, except if you build an egg machine. Then you're guilty until you can prove yourself innocent, and that's just not our system. It's not the American way." ◻

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DOES KOREA NEED US NOW?

The war is long over, South Korea's economy is flourishing, democracy is on the rise...it's time to make a graceful exit.

BY DOUG BANDOW

Thirty-eight years ago this June, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel. Within three days Seoul fell and the South Korean forces were soon almost destroyed. U.S. troops, along with small foreign contingents under the auspices of the United Nations, intervened, later followed by hundreds of thousands of "Chinese People's Volunteers" on the other side. The front eventually stabilized near the original boundary, and the combatants signed an armistice in July 1953. The war cost America 54,000 dead and at least $75 billion—5.6 percent of the aggregate GNP between 1950 and 1953.

When discussions over a permanent peace proved fruitless, the United States initiated a mutual defense treaty with the Republic of Korea. The agreement does not itself guarantee military assistance, but the presence of 40,000 American soldiers acts as a tripwire, making U.S. engagement automatic.

While his predecessor proposed withdrawing American forces from the peninsula, President Reagan has strengthened official ties to Seoul. U.S. troops, pledged Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in 1983, will remain in South Korea "as long as the people of Korea want and need that presence."

Yet is such a permanent military guarantee really in our interest? The security commitment is expensive—the United States not only maintains an infantry division in South Korea but also earmarks forces located elsewhere in the Pacific for Korea's naval and air defense. All told, the United States spends nearly $25 billion annually to defend South Korea, according to defense analyst Earl Ravenal.

Moreover, the tripwire threatens to suck the United States into another bloody conflict far from home. The Korean border, marked by a heavily fortified "demilitarized zone," remains one of the most hostile in the world: almost one-and-a-half million troops face one another across a 155-mile border, in contrast to only two million soldiers across the entire 4,600-mile Sino-Soviet border. The two Koreas are still technically at war, and small but deadly military clashes are common. Since 1953, 90 Americans and more than 1,000 South Koreans have died in border skirmishes. Tensions between North and South flared most recently over the North's bombing of a South Korean airliner.

There is also a political cost to stationing U.S. troops in South Korea. Though the country appears to be moving successfully toward democracy, the U.S. record there has not been a good one: "It's not that we don't like Americans," said one demonstrator last summer, "but for 37 years you've been supporting the wrong guy here." Only as demonstrations swept South Korea did the Reagan administration soften its support for the military-backed government of Chun Doo Hwan, pressuring it to hold elections.

Thus, despite many positive developments over the last year—particularly a relatively free election, greater press freedom, and increased civil liberties—many student activists remain committed to expunging American influence from their nation. Even many members of the middle class blame the United States for Chun's original military coup and his brutal suppression of a student insurrection in the city of Kwangju in 1980. And if the military again seizes power, the United States inevitably will be seen as collaborating with the oppressors.

Finally, there is no reason to believe a U.S. pullout would lead to a Communist conquest of the South. The disaster of 1950 occurred because the country was not prepared for war. Today the South has twice the population and five times as large an economy as the North; Seoul's military is strong and will eventually outstrip that of Pyongyang.

World War II is the backdrop of U.S. involvement in Korea. It left that nation, like Germany and Austria, divided between East and West, and efforts to unify the peninsula were opposed by South Korean strongman Syngman Rhee as well as the Soviets. So on May 10,

1948, the Republic of Korea was established, followed by the Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North. Like Rhee, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung claimed authority over the entire peninsula.

In 1949 the Truman administration withdrew its troops and, in part in reaction to Rhee's increasingly repressive rule and his threat to liberate the northern "lost territories," refused to sell the South tanks, antitank weapons, and other heavy equipment. In January 1950 Secretary of State Dean Acheson explicitly excluded Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter; five months later the North invaded the South.

The Korean War, a "police action" in Truman's words, was not a popular conflict in the United States, coming so soon after the end of World War II. But U.S. intervention and the succeeding defense treaty flowed naturally from America's position as the world's dominant anti-Communist power. That position also led to defense commitments to some 40 nations, maintained through a global network of 1,600 military installations, 493,000 troops aground, and another 245,000 afloat.

Several decades later, however, the public appears ready to reconsider America's global military role, particularly the commitment to Korea. While a 1986 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations poll found that 64 percent of opinion leaders would send troops to defend South Korea, only 24 percent of the public backed military intervention. Indeed, more people supported going to war to help China against the USSR and to defend Saudi Arabia from Iran than to assist Seoul.

This skepticism is fully warranted. Extensive U.S. involvement around the world may have been the only alternative when an exhausted Europe could not have prevented the Red Army from sweeping to the Pyrenees mountains, when Japan had been disarmed, and when South Korea's military was little more than a domestic constabulary. But the world has changed.

The most important contrast between then and now—which makes the likely consequences of withdrawing U.S. troops so very different today—is South Korea's development. After the war, much of that country lay in ruins. Per capita income was barely $134 a year. Today, its per capita income of $2,300 places South Korea near the top of the developing world and is three times that of the North.

American intervention in 1950 resulted more from outrage over a Communist attempt to swallow a helpless friend than from concern about U.S. security.

South Korea's economy grew an astounding 12.5 percent in 1986 and 12.2 percent last year; the North's economy has been essentially stagnant since 1970. And while South Korea is one of the world's leading trading nations, running an annual surplus with the United States of some $7.6 billion, Pyongyang has defaulted on $800 million in foreign loans and suffers from severe economic bottlenecks and shortages. Moreover, the South's population, 43.3 million, is more than twice that of the North's 20.5 million.

True, North Korea is stronger militarily. Like most Communist nations, it has invested a disproportionate share of its resources in defense. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, its military totals 838,000, compared to 598,000 for South Korea, though the South's reserves are larger. Pyongyang also maintains a substantial numerical edge in aircraft, combat naval vessels, tanks, and other equipment.

These statistical differences, however, "are usually overstated, almost always misleading, and often meaningless," warns Stephen Goose, a congressional staffer for Rep. Robert Mrazek (D-N.Y.). For South Korea is not without its own advantages, including its mountainous terrain. In 1950, the South was so poorly prepared to fight that its topography mattered little; today, with its military capabilities well developed, South Korea's geographical characteristics significantly improve its defense.

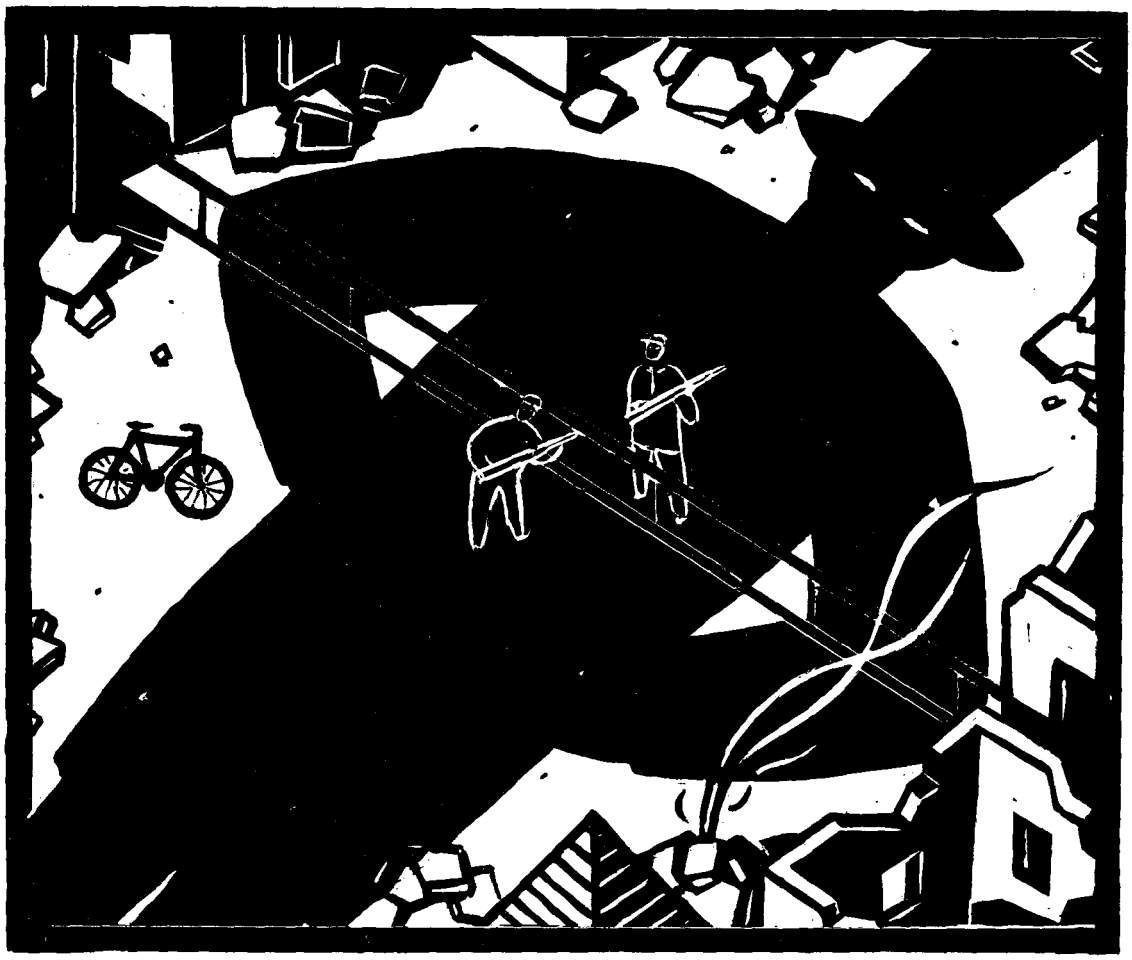
According to a 1980 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study, the terrain "is such a dominant factor in assessing the military balance between the two Koreas that conventional measures of military strength do not fully apply." Geography would greatly constrain Pyongyang's use of armor, for instance. The CBO estimates that North Korea could only bring about half of its tanks immediately to bear in an invasion, and the South, given its extensive fortifications, could achieve as much as a three-to-one kill ratio.

Moreover, the South's weapons are generally newer, more sophisticated, and more reliable than those of the North. This factor, says Goose, is "the single most important aspect" of the military equation. South Korea's soldiers are also better trained.

In any case, the South's quantitative military deficiencies are an understandable result of the U.S. defense commitment. After all, South Korea has let U.S. forces carry much of its defense burden: the 40,000 American personnel on the peninsula and additional naval and air contingents from Japan, the Philippines, and Guam would enter any conflict almost immediately, followed by large numbers of ground troops from the continental United States and possibly Europe. Moreover, some South Korean analysts, like Sang Woo Rhee, director of the East Asian Studies Center at Sogang University, contend that the United States has for political reasons consistently blocked South Korean attempts to acquire more-advanced weapons.

Indeed, recent events clearly show that South Korea is not locked into a position of inferiority. Its military spending grew sharply following limited troop withdrawals from the peninsula initiated by President Richard Nixon. The South has outspent the North militarily since the mid-1970s, with outlays climbing from $558 million in 1974 to $3.5 billion in 1984. And over the last decade Seoul has devoted twice as many resources as Pyongyang to procurement: South Korea, which could not even produce rifles little more than a decade ago, is now manufacturing F-5 aircraft, howitzers, AIM-9 missiles, and rocket launchers.

In fact, last year Seoul's defense minister, Lee Ki Baek, told a forum at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington that his country expects to achieve military balance with the North within two to three years. Equally optimistic is Eulkwon Kim of the Ilhae Institute. "There's a maxim in military strategy that if you have only 70 percent of



MARK MATCHO

the enemy's objective capability, you can defend against him," Kim says, "and within the next two years, South Korea will have reached that level."

Moreover, it will be almost impossible for North Korea to maintain its military edge in the years ahead. A 1985 Rand Corporation study estimates that the North would have to devote 36 to 42 percent of its GNP—more than twice the current share—to the military to simply match an expenditure of 6 to 7 percent of Seoul's GNP. In addition, the South's advantages will increase as its economy expands at an annual rate several times that of Pyongyang. Concluded the Rand study: "South Korea's economic, technological, and military capabilities can be expected to grow substantially relative to those of North Korea during the next decade. The resulting balance should increasingly and predominantly favor the South." In short, there is no reason South Korea could not defend itself, given time to remedy its current military weaknesses and assuming no direct intervention by either the USSR or China.

And their involvement in any conflict is highly unlikely. The Soviets did provide Pyongyang with weapons and appear to have done nothing to discourage North Korea's aggression in 1950. China, while not involved in the initial attack, essentially took over the North Korean war effort when the allied army neared the Yalu River. The attitudes of both the Soviet Union and China have changed dramatically since then, however.

China now places a high priority on the peninsula's stability, in keeping with its own extensive reform program. Beijing has indicated that it would not support a North Korean invasion; in 1983 China began pressing Pyongyang to take a more flexible position in reunification talks. Moreover, China and South Korea have initiated a variety of cultural, sports, and academic exchanges. Trade between the two nations runs some $1.5 billion annually—more than between Beijing and the North—and the governments have successfully defused several potentially serious confrontations involving Chinese defectors. Last year South Korea's assistant foreign minister, Park Soo Gil, said that "it isn't a matter of *if* we're going to have closer relations with China, but *when*."

In contrast, the Soviet Union has done little to improve its relations with South Korea, which were frozen after the 1983 shoot-down of the KAL 007 flight. Nevertheless, while the USSR has been strengthening its relationship with North Korea and supplying Pyongyang with advanced weaponry, U.S. aid to Seoul has been three times that of combined Soviet and Chinese assistance to the North. More important, there is no evidence that the Soviets would like Pyongyang to start a war over which they would have no control. Indeed, though the USSR publicly supports the North's claim to be the peninsula's sole legitimate government, it has privately encouraged Kim Il Sung to follow the two-Germany model.

Even if the Soviets wanted to directly support a North Korean invasion, it would be difficult for them to do so. According to the Congressional Budget Office, "the territory is so constraining" near the 10-mile Soviet/North Korea border "that the operation would have to be considered very risky." Given the short border, the

irregular terrain, and the presence of only two potential supply routes, added the CBO, "a Soviet invasion would require the acquiescence of China for both the initial troop movement and subsequent supply convoys—an unlikely prospect." Such geographic and political realities undoubtedly have contributed to a climate in which, says one U.S. diplomat in Seoul, "none of us"—China, the United States, or the Soviet Union—"wants war on the Korean Peninsula."

Moreover, a militarily revitalized Japan could provide a major counterweight to Chinese and Soviet influence on Korean affairs. Tokyo has an interest in preserving Korea's stability, since part of the Korean Peninsula is only 35 miles from the Japanese islands. In fact, over the years the Japanese government has provided South Korea's government with substantial amounts of economic aid, including $4 billion in loans in 1983 alone.

In the future Japan could help redress any military imbalance created by an American pullout. Japan's military outlays last year, roughly $32 billion, placed it third in the world, according to Katsuro Sakoh, president of the Institute for Pacific Studies. And Japan's armed forces—470 combat aircraft, 52 destroyers and frigates, 3,700 tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery pieces—may lag behind those of the leading military antagonists, but they are not insignificant. Moreover, Japan has typically spent less than 1 percent of its GNP on defense; only last year did the government break what had been an informal postwar limit. Japan is capable of doing far more and would have a powerful incentive to do so if the United States brought its troops home.

Even with the changed circumstances between 1950 and 1988, dare the United States risk reducing its military role in East Asia? Yes, for the integrity of the South Korean government is simply not critical to this nation's security. Former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke claims that the loss of Korea "would be the end of our position in the entire Pacific," but government officials are far too promiscuous in declaring foreign countries to be vital. While a friendly government in Seoul is obviously helpful, this country's defense posture would not be materially worsened without the Asian outpost.

Indeed, American intervention in 1950 resulted more from outrage over what was seen as a Communist attempt to swallow a helpless friend than concern about U.S. security. Not only had the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared the Korean Peninsula to be strategically unimportant, but before the North's invasion even Gen. Douglas MacArthur said that it was not necessary for the United States to defend Seoul.

The peninsula is, of course, the center of great power rivalries, but the United States will never be able to match the pressure that both China and the Soviet Union could place on what is for them nearby territory. The sea lanes adjoining South Korea are vital for the USSR and China, not for us. (More important to the United States, in Sakoh's view, is the Soya Strait, which lies between Japan's Hokkaido Island and the Soviet's Sakhalin Island; control of the Korean peninsula does not help protect this channel.)

Communist control of the South might extend the reach of the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet, but China would be more threatened by that development than would the United States. And in any case, North Korea has jealously guarded its independence, permitting no foreign bases.

Japan would certainly feel less secure if Pyongyang controlled the entire peninsula, but even in the late 1940s neither the Joint Chiefs nor General MacArthur believed that preservation of South Korea was necessary for Japan's defense. That country is already within range of Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean forces and could meet any increased danger after a U.S. withdrawal through greater defense expenditures of its own. After all, no one in Asia doubts the military prowess of the Japanese.

We do have other interests in Korea—economic and cultural, as well as the desire to help prevent a semi-free country from being swept into a Stalinist dark age—but they hardly warrant an American promise to go to war. This nation should reserve military intervention for instances where its own survival is genuinely threatened.

In the light of all these considerations, the United States should announce its intention to cancel the mutual defense treaty at the end of, say, five years. The infantry division would be removed within two years; the air force units located in Korea would be brought out at the end of the five-year period. The troops would be demobilized, since dropping a military commitment should result in a concomitant reduction in forces.

During the transition the United States should sell to South Korea any nonnuclear military equipment that is desired, including the heavy weapons used by departing U.S. troops. Doing so would avoid repeating the original blunder of refusing to help equip the South Korean military before withdrawing our troops in 1949. South Korea has both the money to purchase new weapons and the people to man them. Moreover, the United States would benefit economically as Seoul used some of its $7.6-billion trade surplus to buy the equipment necessary to make it militarily independent.

The United States should also encourage South Korea and Japan to enter into a bilateral security arrangement. In any case, however, at the end of the transition period South Korea would have graduated from the U.S. military safety net, and its defense would be its own responsibility.

For 35 years the United States has sought to deter a repeat North Korean invasion. It's now time to turn that responsibility over to the South Koreans. A withdrawal would still allow the United States to maintain a significant presence in the Pacific, if desired. But dropping this commitment, and thus the potential for unnecessary military involvement, would increase our own security.

Moreover, it would improve our political relations with Seoul, since our reputation would no longer be held hostage to the vagaries of South Korea's volatile domestic politics. In the short run, a pullout might leave the U.S. government less able to influence any given Korean policy. In the long run, however, U.S.-Korean relations would likely be more stable and productive.

Of course, disengagement would not be risk-free: North Korea's Kim Il Sung might decide to march south, U.S. influence abroad might suffer, and the USSR might become more aggressive. All of these are possible, though not likely. But no foreign policy is without costs. American citizens now pay a very high price to ensure the safety of a nation that is now capable of defending itself. Chancing a few unlikely foreign "losses" would be a small price to pay for the very real benefit of strengthening our own economy, enhancing peoples' freedom, and reducing the likelihood of war. ◻

Contributing Editor Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. He formerly served as a special assistant to President Reagan.

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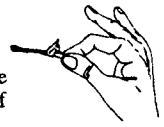

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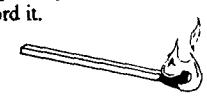

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WE'RE NOT IMPORT GORGERS

BY JAMES C. MOONEY

There is a widely held perception today that U.S. businesses are no longer competing effectively in the world's marketplaces. The United States' large trade deficit is presented as evidence of our inability to sell our products to foreigners compared with our desire to buy theirs.

If this were true, then U.S. uncompetitiveness would indeed be a serious problem. But it's not true. In fact, the *opposite* is the truth.

Many Americans believe that the trade deficit reflects a one-way flood of Japanese goods into the United States, while Japan prevents U.S. products from entering its markets. This makes Japan's businesses appear to be more effective than they really are.

In fact, for the last few years the United States has proven to be better than Japan (and most other countries) at competing for the world's business. From November 1982 to November 1986, the output of U.S. manufacturers increased by 30 percent. This dramatic growth far outpaced that of any other major country, including Japan. Also, since manufacturing employment rose by 6 percent while output rose by 30 percent, there was obviously a huge increase in productivity—more than 4 percent a year in the United States compared with just 2.5 percent in Japan for the same period.

The U.S. economy has grown at an average rate of more than 4 percent for five years—one of the longest and strongest U.S. expansions in a century. Over the same five-year period, stock prices have doubled, interest rates have been halved, inflation has been reduced from 13 percent to 3 percent, private saving has increased by more than $200 billion a year, real hourly compensation is up 5 percent, and after-tax per capita income is up 10 percent. Eleven million new jobs have been created, giving the United States the highest total rate of employment in its history and a rate higher than Japan's. No other country in the world has an economy that has been as successful as ours over the last five years.

So why do we still have huge trade deficits? The reason is mostly our trading partners' inability to duplicate our economic success. The increase in the U.S. deficit has been entirely due to falling exports, not "gorging ourselves on imports." In fact, imports account for a smaller share of our economy today than in 1980 and a much smaller share than in any other major country. We aren't buying more—other countries are buying less.

Why? Put simply, they can't afford to buy more. Most countries never escaped from the worldwide recession of 1981-82. European countries, for example, have experienced a dismal growth rate—below 1 percent per year on average since 1980. Also, lack of employment growth in other nations has kept their buying ability depressed. From 1980 to 1985, employment in Europe *fell* by 0.3 percent per year. Japan's 1 percent annual increase was better, but still not as impressive as our increase of 1.5 percent per year.

Also, according to the U.S. Labor Department, the United States has been creating more high-paying managerial and professional jobs than low-paying service, labor, and farm jobs. This trend has been in effect for over four years now and contradicts the myth that the U.S. economy has been producing mostly low-paying, unskilled jobs during this period.

A better picture of U.S. competitiveness can be seen by comparing the share of his income that the average American spends on foreign goods with the share of his income that the average foreigner spends on U.S. goods. Canada is the United States' largest trading partner, and its average citizen spends over 14 percent of his income on U.S. goods while the average American spends only 1.7 percent of his on Canadian goods. Taiwan is another major trading partner. The average Taiwanese spends about 8 percent of his income on U.S. goods; the average American, less than 0.5 percent of his on Taiwanese goods.

Despite these great trade discrepancies in favor of the United States on a per capita basis, we still had a $22-billion trade deficit with Canada and a $13-billion deficit with Taiwan in 1985. In fact, while no country sells more to the United States per capita than the United States sells abroad, we still have trade deficits because our citizens *earn* so much more per capita than the rest of the world.

This helps clarify what is needed to reduce our trade deficits. Actions that discourage Americans from purchasing foreign products, such as tariffs, are not at all helpful. Instead, actions that encourage other countries' economic growth are needed. Foreigners must be able to afford to buy more U.S. goods.

A sizable group of very confused politicians has used the trade deficit to call for steps that would shut off or severely limit imports into the United States. This would inevitably lead to similar restrictions on U.S. goods abroad. Because foreigners on a per capita basis spend far more on U.S. products than we spend on foreign products, the United States has the most to lose from such protectionism.

So what can be done to stimulate growth in foreign economies? Very sim-

CLAUDIA TANTILLO

ply, other nations need to follow the examples set by the United States for economic prosperity—moderate tax rates, deregulation, privatization, and moderate monetary growth. Indeed, countries that have adopted similar policies have performed better than those that chose not to.

The United Kingdom reduced its top tax rates from 83 percent to 60 percent, deregulated many industries, and privatized many businesses. Its economic growth has been one of the best in Europe as a result, and a great improvement for that country in particular. Turkey has experienced the fastest growth in Europe—7 percent in 1986 alone. Most of this growth can be attributed to its top tax rate falling from 68 percent to 50 percent. India also reduced its top rate and saw a considerable increase in growth.

Throughout the rest of Europe, countries that chose high tax rates and excessive government interference in the marketplace (such as France) have performed dismally. Europeans should be able to afford to buy many more U.S. goods, but they can't until they reduce unemployment rates (the average is 11 percent) and increase economic growth. The same goes for developing nations, which have had to live with stagnated earnings and high unemployment rates.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that what caused the world stock markets to crash in October was renewed investor fears that the policies of economic growth would be replaced with the destructive policies of the past. "Things began to go sour," economist Alan Reynolds wrote in *National Review* last November, "as the White House showed signs of being increasingly unwilling or unable to resist Congress's return to its old ways of doling out favors"—namely, through antitrade and antiwealth measures.

"By October 19," observed Reynolds, "the odds of bad U.S. trade and tax legislation appeared greatly increased, while the odds of Japanese and German tax reform or monetary cooperation seemed greatly reduced. Opportunities for profitable trade were thus in jeopardy all around the world."

Although it is hard to believe, some politicians have said they believe the crash was the market's way of calling for higher taxes on corporations, stockholders, and consumers, along with "stiff" tariffs to "protect" American businesses. The evidence is overwhelming that such actions could only lead to economic stagnation and more depressed economies. For example, these exact policies were the main reason why the Great Depression in this country was so long and severe.

One result of a recession caused by bad economic policies would be a decline in U.S. consumer buying, which would finally reduce our trade deficit. But causing a recession is not a very good way to get rid of a statistic whose meaning in unclear anyway.

What the United States needs to do now is continue to implement the same policies of reducing taxes and government interference that have been so effective over the last five years. Also, we should expound more loudly on the benefits of lower tax rates and open trade policies to those countries that have not already begun to enact them. By doing so, we will continue our own prosperity and encourage similar growth abroad.

James C. Mooney is a financial consultant with Thomson McKinnon Securities in Cincinnati.

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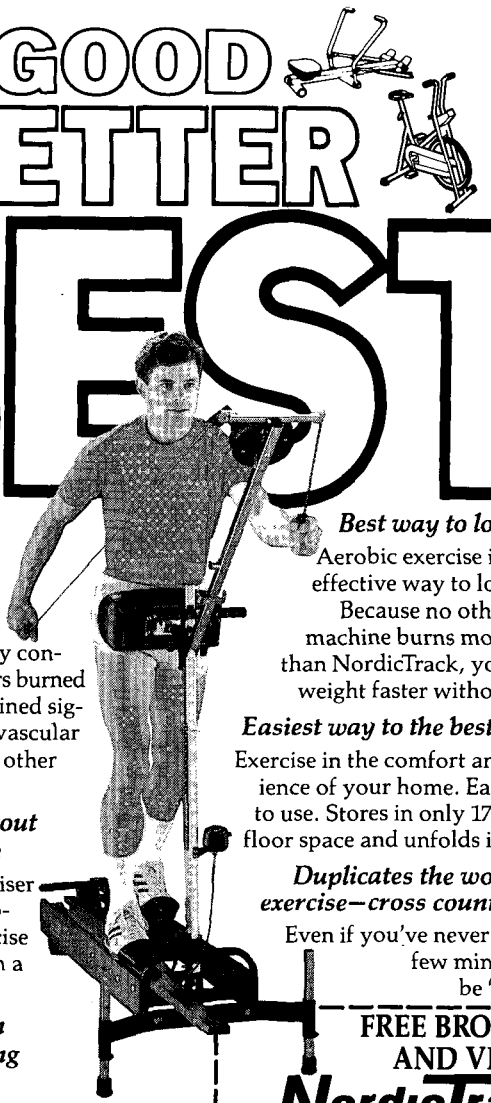

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★★★ FOR THIS GUIDE

BY VIRGINIA I. POSTREL

Press bashing is a favorite—perhaps *the* favorite—conservative pastime.

"Can anything—should anything—be done" about the press's liberal bias, asks retiring *National Review* publisher William A. Rusher in a recent issue. His answer: Yes and yes. What we need is more government, specifically a rigorously enforced Fairness Doctrine for print and electronic media alike. Rusher may hate liberal journalists, but he shares their government-is-the-cure bias.

There has to be a better way. And Jude Wanniski may have found it.

For the third year, the irrepressible publicist for supply-side economics and his own consulting business has come out with a *Michelin Guide* to the print media—complete with stars for reporters and commentators. To evaluate journalists, *The 1988 Media Guide* applies generally accepted accounting standards, not ideological ax-grinding. If the press does a good job by its own lights, Wanniski implies, conservatives (not to mention Truth) will be well served.

"Reed Irvine [of Accuracy in Media] is only searching for *sin* and *error*," he says, putting on a hellfire-and-damnation voice. "I decided to go the other way. I look for excellence."

To that end, the book awards four stars to reporters who are "loftily objective, pacesetters for the profession in reporting and writing, [with] penetrating analytical skills, always worth reading." Four-star commentators set the pace "in journalistic integrity and independence" and provide "must reading for insights and information, a consistently well-shaped point of view."

In addition to rating individuals, Wanniski and his team of editors and anonymous "news gourmets" bluntly assess 38 publications, ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* to *National Journal* and *Mother Jones*. (REASON is not covered.)

The voice of the reviews—let's call it "Wanniski," for simplicity—is that of an old-time newsman, a crusty but benign judge who likes scoops and hard-hitting, fact-filled pieces. He expects reporters, especially if they cover science or business, to understand what they're looking at. Wanniski is impatient with "fluff," broadly defined. He likes journalists who convey "the most amount of information for the least amount of time spent."

As a result, he downgrades some fine reporting. James Fallows of *The Atlantic*, one of the most consistently interesting and informative reporters (and best writers) around, rates a mere one-and-a-half stars: Too much cultural anthropology. Not enough economics. And the book completely omits *The Atlantic*'s best writer, David Owen, a man who can make sheetrock sing and explains the controversies over kids' toys better than anyone.

(In fact, the *Guide* seems to have *The Atlantic* confused with *National Journal* as a source of Beltway political chatter rather than a general-interest magazine. The only exception is a nod to Nicholas Lemann's piece on African masks.)

Similarly, Wanniski's justifiable devotion to nuts-and-bolts business stories blinds him to one of the press tragedies of our times—the transformation of the *Wall Street Journal*'s lively and quirky A-hed (better known as "that funny middle column about all the weird stuff") into warmed-over *Newsweek*.

On a more positive note, Wanniski likes the *Los Angeles Times* for all the right reasons—its superb foreign reporting, its valiant attempts to be objective, and its frequent combination of the two, as in its Central America coverage. He skewers its predictable editorial page and gives its so-so business pages a so-so mark, not recognizing that half the business stories are in the "Calendar" section. (There's no business like show business).

Despite taking criticism from a sarcastic *American Spectator* article for including this "regional" paper in last year's *Guide*, Wanniski has wisely increased coverage of the *Times*. It is a regional paper—but the region includes all of the Pacific Rim and Latin America, as well as the nation's largest state. (And, after all, the *Guide* includes other regional publications—the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *The Washington Monthly*, *The Washingtonian*... you get the drift.)

Wanniski knows a good story when he sees one. The *Guide* rightly honors James Gleick of the *New York Times* for his exceptional coverage of breakthroughs in superconductors and for being the first to recognize the significance of what was happening. And the book gives high marks to Alex Kotlowitz's riveting *Wall Street Journal* article on the day-to-day violence of a 12-year-old's life in a Chicago public-housing project. The piece deserved a Pulitzer.

In fact, Wanniski is generally on target. The *American Spectator* is indeed excellent about every third issue. The "Harper's Index" is cutesy and the most notable part of the magazine. *National Journal* is "without a doubt the nation's most influential publication relative to its subscription base, a mere 5,600." Charlotte Low does do a superb job covering legal issues for *Insight*. Gregory Fossedal does suffer from "trying to cover the world

LAURA MAIN

from Palo Alto whilst writing books." Malcolm S. Forbes Sr.'s column does read "as if he composed it while motorcycling from his hot-air balloon to his yacht."

Wanniski's worst pick: *Insight*'s puff profile of George Bush as a combination of Ozzie Nelson, Douglas MacArthur, Winston Churchill, and Mother Teresa. The *Guide* ranks the piece the sixth-best of the year in political reporting, mainly for realizing that Bush may be the next president. If so, I hope George doesn't believe everything he reads.

Similarly, the *Guide* is unduly generous to *Policy Review*, the Heritage Foundation's quarterly. *PR*, says Wanniski, "alters the terms of the debate," presumably filling for conservatives the role *The New Republic* plays for liberals.

Actually, *PR* generally takes the debate as given and preaches the Heritage gospel. It's journalistic and competently written (or edited) but rarely pathbreaking. The magazine peaked in 1983, with Tom Bethell's "The Lost Civilization of UNESCO"—a vivid, detailed, and analytic portrait of good intentions gone evil and incompetent. After Bethell, the United States just couldn't stay in UNESCO; it would be too embarrassing. Now *that* altered the terms of the debate.

Wanniski extols *PR*'s foreign policy coverage, undoubtedly its strong suit. But he misses what's missing, namely, conflict. For that, you have to turn to another quarterly—one that Wanniski gives unduly faint praise. *The National Interest*, a three-year-old product of Irving Kristol's "got a problem, start a magazine" philosophy, has shoved *Commentary* aside as the leading place to publish conservative writing on foreign policy. (*TNI*'s rise may explain *Commentary*'s slump and its increased reliance on lifestyle bashing to fill its pages.) In addition to hosting the definitive NATO debate, *TNI* has run excellent articles on arms control, U.S. global strategy, specific countries, and (its best) nuclear winter.

Wanniski's *Guide* is a bit too entrepreneurial and crass for some tastes—which is why *The American Spectator*, a frequent practicioner of the bitch-and-moan approach to media criticism, panned it last year. Wanniski fairly begs for mocking reviews, however, by weirdly recounting in the introduction exactly how much attention the *Guide* got last year. Take my advice, Jude, keep your press clippings to yourself and let the book do the talking. Or, as they say in the journalism business, show, don't tell.

And, so far, the *Guide* hasn't quite found its market. Wanniski sold around 5,000 copies last year, and he says he is losing about $150,000 a year on the venture. In my informal survey of two not-so-randomly-selected business journalists—one of them rated in the book—neither respondent had ever heard of the *Guide*. The one not rated had, however, heard of Jude Wanniski.

Supply-sider that he is, Wanniski is trusting Say's Law—supply creates its own demand. And if my own experience is any indication, the *Guide* will be devoured by business reporters turned think-magazine editors. In other words, I loved it.

Assistant Editor Virginia I. Postrel is a former Wall Street Journal *and* Inc. *reporter.*

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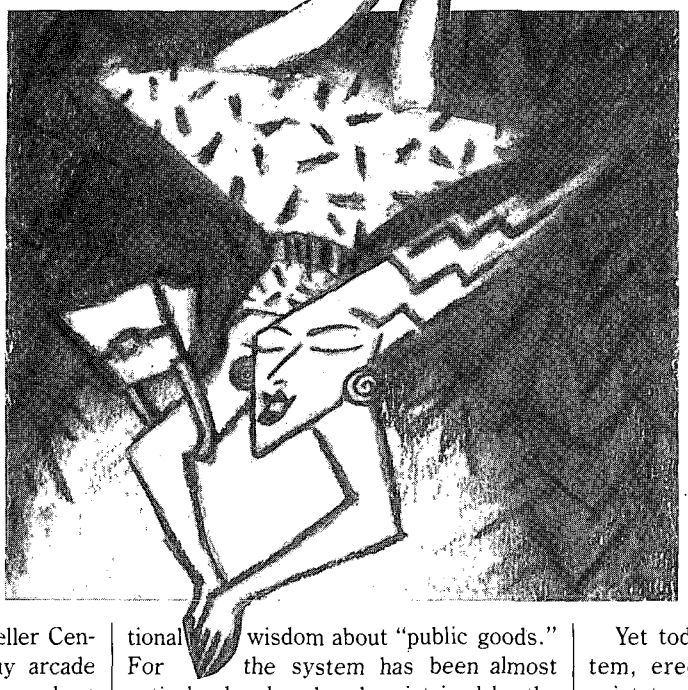
SUBTERRANEAN TREASURES

BY J. BRIAN PHILLIPS



First-time visitors to Houston are often impressed by the city's modern skyline, the Johnson Space Center, and the Astrodome. But while visitors, and many Houstonians, are busy looking upward, one of the city's best-kept secrets lies right beneath their feet.

Running throughout the central business district, a series of air-conditioned tunnels and skywalks connects nearly 75 percent of the major buildings, allowing pedestrians to walk from one side of downtown to another without ever setting foot outdoors.

The city's first tunnel, built in 1931 to connect three downtown theaters, was inspired by a similar structure under Rockefeller Center in New York City. A penny arcade was installed in the tunnel, and for a short period it enjoyed success and fame. But the theaters closed and the tunnel eventually filled with debris. It was 1947 before another one was built, this time connecting a department store to its parking garage.

In 1951 the first tunnel linking two office buildings was constructed. During the 1960s and '70s, development accelerated both above and below ground as Houston grew into the nation's fourth-largest city. Until the mid-'70s, most of the tunnels connected adjacent buildings, or office buildings to parking garages. "Our employees and our tenants should be able to get to and from their cars without being soaked, blistered, or frozen," explained one banking official.

By the mid-'70s, two-and-a-half miles of tunnels snaked their way under Houston. Today The Connection, as the system has been dubbed, is over six miles long, and most of the tunnels have been interconnected.

The Connection is an impressive engineering achievement. Perhaps more interesting, though, it is an impressive economic achievement, defying the conventional wisdom about "public goods." For the system has been almost entirely developed and maintained by the private sector.

Houston's ordinances give building owners control of their land to the middle of the road. The city is granted easement rights along the surface for utilities and streets, but what goes on below the surface is up to the property owner, as long as he moves any below-ground utilities when constructing a tunnel. This has proven to be one of the major costs involved, as there are thousands of miles of electric power cables, street light cables, gas lines, water pipes, and storm and sewer pipes running under city streets.

At a construction cost of over $15,000 per square foot, a typical tunnel can easily reach a price tag of $1 million. So it's not surprising that from its humble beginnings as a sterile walkway between parking garages and office buildings, The Connection has evolved into a major retail area. Nestled along the corridors are over 100 shops and businesses—florists, banks, travel agents, film developers, office supply stores, cleaners, printers, jewelers, delis, even postal facilities.

Until about five years ago, the possibility of getting lost in the system was a big drawback. Responding to complaints about this, which was clearly discouraging use of the tunnels, a group of downtown merchants pooled money to develop a name and initiate the posting of signs. "The Connection" was born, and the ad hoc tunnel committee hoped peer pressure would get building owners to put up signs.

Standard notions about public goods suggest that such improvements pose a problem. Everyone benefits even if only a few people pay; the potential for such free riding means that common benefits won't be provided at all if some central authority doesn't impose a tax on everyone to pay for them.

Yet today, kiosks throughout the system, erected by individual businesses, point tunnel travelers in the right direction. And the fact is that those who are paying are also receiving most of the benefits. Nearly all of the buildings in the heart of the system—the most heavily traveled area—have invested in kiosks. Buildings in less frequently traveled areas have not, because the low traffic does not justify them. Some downtown businesses have printed maps as a service to their customers, but because these maps also provide advertising, those who are paying are again receiving the greatest benefits.

Building owners have alleviated another potential free-rider problem—with air conditioning—by installing doors between sections of the tunnel. These prevent some areas from benefiting from the air conditioning in others.

As the tunnel system has expanded, building owners have found that access to it is almost imperative. Louis Sklar, an executive at Gerald D. Hines Interests, the largest tunnel developer, maintains that "any building, to be viable in downtown Houston, has to be on the tunnel system." It is an amenity that prospective tenants find appealing, for it allows employees to avoid Houston's infa-

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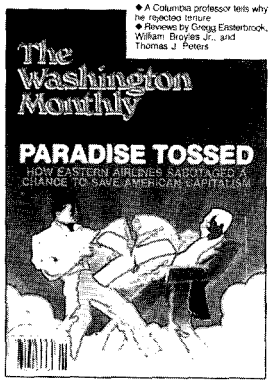

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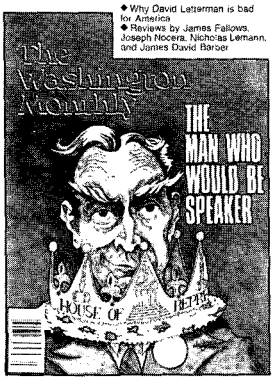

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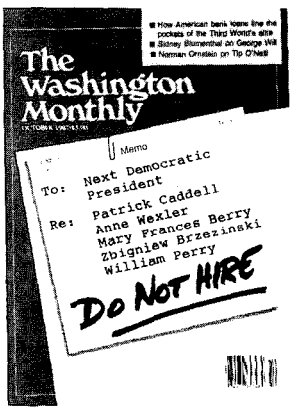

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HOUSTON

mous summer weather, as well as winter's brisk "blue northers," which send frigid Arctic air whistling through the city's concrete canyons. Of the downtown workforce of about 175,000 people, 14,000 use the tunnel on an average weekday. On rainy days, another 4,000 scurry through the corridors.

Patrons also like the system's cleanliness. Because the tunnels are privately owned, building owners have an interest in maintaining a clean and safe environment. An abundance of ashtrays throughout the system, for example, keeps the floor clear of cigarette butts.

Building owners are responsible for security, and guards and security cameras are visible throughout the system. While crime is not unheard of in The Connection, the narrow corridors, limited access, and absence of dark alleys are obvious deterrents. And the lower crime rate has reduced insurance costs for many tunnel businesses.

Panhandlers and other street people seldom enter the tunnels. When they do, "we call the police," said one security guard. And since access at night is very limited, the homeless do not find it a convenient shelter.

Hotel managers like the tunnels' security. Their guests can attend an evening performance at one of the city's performing arts centers and return to their hotel without walking along the vacant streets late at night.

Retailers rave about The Connection's benefits, among them the built-in upscale clientele. "If I had to pick any location in Houston," says camera store owner Jim Strawbridge, "I would probably pick this one." Self-proclaimed "tunnel rat" Paul Couch, an assistant manager at a flower shop, claims that he can make deliveries to 98 percent of the buildings without going outside.

Yet The Connection is not without its critics. The same retailers who laud the tunnels' benefits bemoan their inability to do any street-level advertising. A surprising number of downtown workers are not even aware of the tunnels' existence.

Some tunnel business owners have gone so far as to declare the tunnel a public asset, like sidewalks, and suggest increased city control. Sklar, the executive at Gerald D. Hines, claims that "some sort of public authority" to maintain the system "would certainly not be all bad." Public ownership, he says, would ensure access to the system (the recently constructed Heritage Plaza was denied access by a competing development company) and would foster a more uniform motif throughout the system.

Others have urged construction of street-level entrances—there is currently only one. Some believe that the lack of access from the street demonstrates shortsightedness that city control could remedy.

Such critics, however, should ponder the fate of a series of tunnels already operated by the city of Houston. Connecting several theaters and parking lots, it was tied into the commercial system several years ago. While most of the private tunnels have carpeted walls and mirrored ceilings, the city's tunnels are entirely tiled. They're also in need of repair and poorly lit; some people have gone so far as to call the city's tunnels "slums." Sklar admits that "if you look at the way they are built and maintained compared to the private systems, you can have some feel for why a lot of people prefer the private tunnels."

As building owners have slowly become more responsive to retailers' desire to increase traffic through the tunnels, calls for public control are decreasing. More building owners are erecting directories in their lobbies and making a greater effort to advertise the tunnel to pedestrians.

While The Connection is not without flaws, it probably would not exist if not for the private sector, where it has evolved gradually. Building the system all at once would have been an engineering and financial nightmare. "Putting in tunnels yourself could be a lot cheaper than trying to coordinate it through some government agency," observes University of Houston economist Steven Craig.

Even Sklar concedes that "the system probably never would have been started if it had not been privately owned." The problems of financing and regulating would have been difficult to overcome, and public support for such a project impossible to obtain.

Thirty years ago, observes Hines, The Connection's benefits would have seemed like a futuristic fantasy. r

J. Brian Phillips is a Houston-based free-lance writer.

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Rediscovering Michelangelo

By John Gillis

The Sistine Chapel in transition: *For the first time since 1512, the ceiling is something the artist would recognize as his own.*

It is a walk, a long walk, through long and then twisting marble corridors. After the last few steps you arrive through a tiny door at the Sistine Chapel, a historic chapel adjacent to St. Peter's Church in Rome, at the center of the old Christian empire. It is a grand space about one third the dimensions of a football field, with a high vaulted ceiling that makes it seem larger. Arriving at that small entry door, at least during the next six years, you see scaffolding covering a small portion of the ceiling.

You enter a world that has been partly hidden for three and a half centuries: the history of mankind as described in the Old Testament, transformed by Michelangelo into powerful, universal imagery. Because of an ongoing restoration, that ceiling—for the first time since 1512, when Michelangelo was 37—is something the artist would recognize as his own.

How you react to the ceiling (regardless of its state of restoration), whether you love it or not, is up to you—but there is no avoiding its impact. You need no knowledge of the biblical stories portrayed to appreciate the work. As in any great work, it succeeds with a lightning immediacy and makes palpable certain human emotions and qualities and experiences. There is nothing else quite like this ceiling in the world—in drama, in visual virtuosity, in audacity, in size. Michelangelo did it in four years, alone on a scaffold. It was four years of terribly hard physical labor married to a mental and emotional conception that made all the hardship worth it. A word, much debased in 1980s America, comes to mind: awesome.

If you have seen the ceiling before, the new scene will be a shock. You realize you have never really seen Michelangelo's ceiling—this is so fresh and richly colored and three-dimensional. This shock has come to many, including many art experts. And it has engendered controversy. The chief restorer, Prof. Gianluigi Colalucci, has had to defend the project against both worthy and unworthy critics. The cleaning is a wonderful revelation, or an unpleasant jolt, depending on how dearly you hold to a previous idea of how Michelangelo's ceiling "should" look.

This ceiling's long history in shadow has created the current reaction—a true culture shock—upon finding that Michelangelo's work has been gravely misunderstood since shortly after he completed it. While the forms, colors, and expressed feelings were, more or less, always visible (though muted), the "new" colors are radical to many.

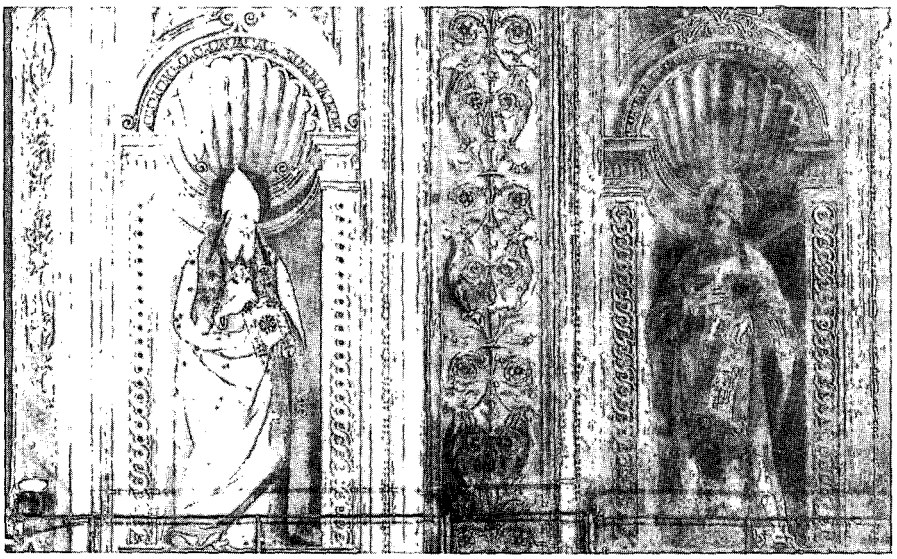
Apparently within a few years after the ceiling was completed, it lost much of its vibrancy to smoke, dust, and animal fats applied to protect or temporarily brighten the work. Thus, almost all the later accounts of the magnificence of the ceiling speak about the muted colors and soft tones. Whether Michelangelo was praised or chastised in a particular generation depended on whether that kind of coloration was popular. If people preferred bold, strong colors, Michelangelo was called a weak colorist, and vice versa.

The restorers are working on one portion of the ceiling or upper wall areas at a time. This small band of experts, under the direction of Colalucci, has been at it since 1980. They will spend about 12 years in the Sistine (with about six years on the ceiling itself)—three times as long as it took Michelangelo to complete the painting.

They started on areas that were less important or done by other artists. They spent four years in this early phase, researching the many layers of debris deposited on the ceiling and perfecting the appropriate techniques for cleaning and repair without affecting, now or later, these irreplaceable frescoes.

A fresco is a painting on plaster, but more exactly, *in* the plaster. When the plain plaster is put up, the painter applies water-based color pigments to the plaster with his brushes, and these colors mingle with the wet plaster, sink in, and become integral to it. A well-made fresco doesn't peel even after centuries (unlike housepaint, for example, which is only on the surface). While this art technique was common in Italy and other European countries for several centuries, it has been all but lost in the 20th century.

JOHN GILLIS



Culture shock: *The cleaning is a wonderful revelation, or an unpleasant jolt, depending on how dearly you hold to a previous idea of how the paintings "should" look.*

The word *fresco* means "fresh," and when referring to plaster means "wet." It is distinguished from *secco*, or "dry." A painter had to have supreme confidence and great skill to work in *fresco*. Once the wet plaster was applied to the ceiling or wall, he had only a matter of hours to paint before it became *secco*. If he failed to achieve the final appearance of the design, of all the colors and all the details of the figures, he had to rip it all down and start over the next day. Oil paintings are much more forgiving and are often reworked for months.

Despite the sturdiness of fresco, it does require care over centuries, and the Sistine paintings, like other frescoes, have been subject to much abuse, mostly unintentional. For example, one restorer in the 18th century used Greek wine and stale bread to clean the ceiling. Until modern times, candles, torches, and braziers were the only sources of light in the chapel—and they are as unhealthy for the ceiling as for the people below.

Mingle these combustion deposits with roof leaks, centuries of dust, misguided restoration attempts, overpainting by later artists, protective coatings that have darkened, and salt deposits—and you have an archaeological dig. Only this dig is upside down, working upward to try to reach the true Michelangelo.

Once the restorers completed their primary research, the application of proven techniques became relatively simple. Most of the ceiling is cleaned by applying distilled water or a diluted well-known restoration cleaner to a small area—about a square foot—at a time. Then the cleaner is cleaned off, and the ceiling is rinsed with distilled water until no residue of the cleaner remains. The complexity arises in knowing how far down (up?) to clean and in determining which small patches of *secco* painting, done after the plaster dried, are Michelangelo's touch-ups and which belong to later painters. Touch-ups that are not Michelangelo's work are usually removed.

But the restorers are not just taking off the accumulated grime and overpainting by others. In certain cracked or water-damaged areas, they are retouching the work with a watercolor paint that can be removed in the future. On close inspection, this work is subtly different in coloration from the immediately adjacent work by Michelangelo. While this difference is impossible to see from the floor of the chapel (65 feet below), it is obvious once you are a foot or two away from the ceiling on a scaffold—as I saw on a recent trip.

If you want to see the results (and the prior appearance) you can buy the new book, *The Sistine Chapel: The Art, the History, and the Restoration*, by Carlo Pietrangeli (and others), recently published by Harmony Books. It serves as a superb, oversized picture book and doubles as a scholarly work describing the chapel in detail. Or you can buy a companion videotape, *Return to Glory: Michelangelo Revealed*, produced by the same people. *Or* you could go there.

Reviewing either the book or videotape shows the tremendous tranformation already wrought by this restoration. And the shock of this new Michelangelo has brought criticism, some plausible, some not, some laughable. There have been brief flurries of controversy from the Italian Communists (long-time enemies of the Vatican) and from a small group of artists and an art historian in the United States.

In early 1987, a group of 15 contemporary artists signed a petition demanding that the Vatican stop the work, then halfway done, and wait a generation or so and see how it holds up. One of them, abstract-expressionist painter Robert Motherwell, said he had not seen the restoration, just color photos: "It looks funny to me. I have a gut feeling that it isn't right."

Another, sculptor George Segal, had not seen the ceiling either (just photos). He told the *New York Times* that he liked the old muted colors, so he worries that restorers have done something wrong. Ironically, these mostly "radical" abstract artists, with no knowledge of fresco techniques, were insisting on a conservatism that would embarrass hidebound right-wingers.

One person with substantial credentials has severely criticized the project. In 1986, an art historian at Columbia University, James Beck, called for a stop to the restoration and raised questions about it. Several experts investigated his allegations and concluded that his objections were in some cases subjective, in others an incorrect reading of historical documents; others were based on no evidence, and still others were reasonable to ask and needed answers.

Some of the sensible questions that he and others have asked are: Is the cleaning solvent really safe? Are any of Michelangelo's own touch-ups (*secco*) being removed? Will the newly exposed, clean surface of the fresco be attacked by modern-day pollutants? Colalucci and other experts had addressed these concerns during their years of study, and every oversight expert who has inspected the work has come back praising the appropriate and careful techniques chosen.

For example, the cleaning agent has been in use for about 25 years and has

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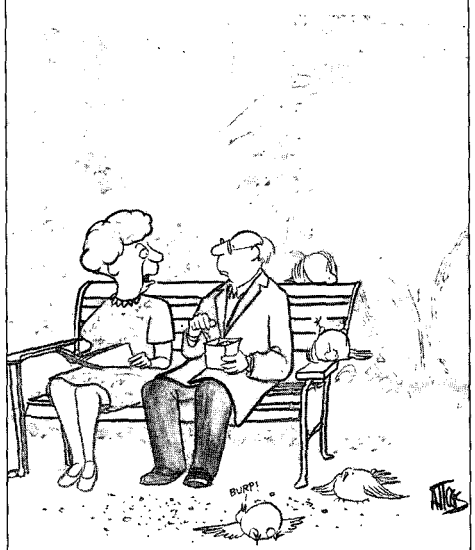
never had any known ill effects on fresco surfaces; there is every chemical reason to believe it never could. Also, identifying Michelangelo's *secco* touch-ups is reportedly easy. While on the scaffold, I saw no touch-ups by Michelangelo—there were none in that particular area—but the brushwork of later artist/restorers attempting to "brighten" the dirty, dulled ceiling is clearly very different in style from Michelangelo's brushwork. If there is any doubt about whose work a touch-up is, a chemical analysis of a microsample can determine in which century the overpainting was done.

Finally, the clean surface will be partly protected from Rome's vehicle exhausts by a sophisticated air system being made by Carrier in the United States. This system will help to reduce the major pollutants, brought by the thousands of visitors who come every day to see the chapel, exuding moisture and heat and stirring up all sorts of dust.

For those who have been to the Vatican in previous years and seen the Sistine Chapel in its encrusted state, the culture shock is something to be embraced, since it reveals an even more exciting, original Michelangelo. For those who never have seen it before, you have the pleasure of a instantaneous trip back to the year 1512, without any intervening shock. And you will have the pleasure of seeing the Sistine ceiling almost as if Michelangelo had descended the scaffold yesterday.

John Gillis is an architect in New York City.



"Will you please stop feeding the pigeons!"

No Bob Dole Here

By Rob Kolson

***Republican Party Reptile*, by P. J. O'Rourke**
New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 220 pages, $7.95 paper

LAURA MAIN

As someone who makes a living by trying to be funny, I know all too well that "funny" is not only in the eye, it's in the mood of the beholder; thus, my initial reaction to P. J. O'Rourke's *Republican Party Reptile*, or, more to the point, my lack thereof, was not necessarily an indication of the book's comic quality. A proper review of a book "intended to be funny" requires adherence to a few well-established rules for evaluating humor.

Rule No. 1: One can fairly evaluate the comic content of a literary work only after receiving some good news.

Good news puts one in the proper frame of mind for an unprejudiced appreciation of humor. However, the news can't be too good. If you heard, for example, that Sam Donaldson had his eyebrows plucked, you might get too happy, and *The Diary of Anne Frank* would seem like a comic masterpiece.

The next rule refers to the necessity the founding fathers of comedy foresaw for checks and balances on the reviewer's objectivity.

Rule No. 2: Read a substantial portion of the book out loud to your friends.

If your friends do not laugh, the book almost surely is not funny, because friends, being friends, are at least disposed to appreciate your own expressive interpretation of the work, if not the work itself. If they do laugh, however, one must be careful about the conclusions drawn. For example, when I read various randomly selected passages of *Republican Party Reptile* to a few reasonably close friends, they laughed uproariously. This could mean one of several things:
(1) The book is truly funny;
(2) The book is not truly funny, but the Lebanese Blond Hash was dynamite stuff.
(3) The book isn't funny as a book, but it makes a great screenplay.

If friends laugh, it is still necessary to apply one more rule in order to reach a definitive conclusion about a book's comic content.

Rule No. 3: Solicit opinions of the book from at least 10 strangers.

This rule subscribes to the notion that there is safety in numbers, especially if the strangers are other book reviewers who have already published their views.

Having pursued all the appropriate channels and having also reread the book on the day that Pat Schroeder withdrew from the presidential campaign, I must now conclude without question that P. J. O'Rourke's latest effort is truly funny, in fact, downright hilarious.

Given all this, you might wonder what the book is about. I could say it's about 220 pages, ha, ha, ha, but that would be stealing a line from another book review written, coincidentally, by P. J. O'Rourke. Stealing from other people is undoubtedly the comic's most efficient way to create new material, but it is unseemly to do it in print, especially if one aspires to the presidency.

Republican Party Reptile is a collection of 21 previously published essays all purported by the author to be written from a conservative Republican point of view, yet which are at the same time intended to be funny. We have already established that the book is truly funny, but it remains to determine whether its point of view is truly Republican. Since the author readily admits that "Funny Republican" is an oxymoron in the public mind, it would seem a considerable accomplishment to consistently make people laugh while fervently campaigning to get *Playboy* and *Penthouse* out of 7-Eleven stores.

This, however, is a side of Republican-

ism that the author rejects, so he offers a new label for other like-minded Republicans, namely, Republican Party reptiles. This breed is opposed to "government spending, Kennedy kids, seat-belt laws, being a pussy about nuclear power, busing our children anywhere other than Yale, trailer courts near our vacation homes, Gary Hart, all tiny Third World countries that don't have banking secrecy laws, aerobics, the U.N., taxation without tax loopholes, and jewelry on men." They are in favor of: "guns, drugs, fast cars, free love (if our wives don't find out), a sound dollar, cleaner environment (poor people should cut it out with the graffiti), a strong military with spiffy uniforms, Nastassia Kinski, Star Wars (or anything else that scares the Russkis)..." So, as far as I can tell, a Republican Party reptile is more or less a libertarian who believes in a strong national defense (or at least a strong national defense budget).

To claim, then, that these essays are written from a conservative Republican point of view is a stretch, at the very least. Not that anyone should care (except, perhaps, the FTC), since the author is a clever and gifted writer. But for the record it should be noted that most of the time one is hard-pressed to discern a particularly conservative political bent, probably because, most of the time, it's hard to discern any political point of view at all.

There are, however, a few notable exceptions. "Ship of Fools" is O'Rourke's account of a sojourn called the "Volga Peace Cruise," a 16-day trip to the Soviet Union advertised in *The Nation* that attracted 160 American tourists, most being "antinuke activists and peace-group organizers with sixties leftover looks." Describing his shipboard companions, O'Rourke writes: "In between palsies of fretting, they'd tell you how wonderful the Soviet Union was....These were people who believed everything about the Soviet Union was perfect, but they were bringing their own toilet paper....A few passengers...were from [major leftist] organizations, but most seemed to be representing tiny peace organizations of their own. And if you didn't stick socks in their mouths right away, they'd tell you all about it."

In "Safety Nazis," the author complains of "safetyist regulatory excesses": "nowadays if a car cannot survive a drop from the Gateway Arch and emits any vapors more noxious than Evening in Paris, the federal government won't let you own it, and what they will let you own you can't really drive, because fifty-five miles an hour is the speed at which a spirited person parallel-parks, not motors to Chicago."

Occasionally the way O'Rourke describes an otherwise neutral topic betrays a particular political leaning: "After ten years of polygonal civil war and invasions and air strikes by Syrians, Israelis, and multilateral peace-keeping forces, [Beirut] still isn't as squalid as some cities that have never been hit by anything but government social programs."

And sometimes a particular political orientation can be inferred from the choice of topic: "Recently I performed an intellectual experiment. I read one issue of *The New York Review of Books*...then watched one evening of prime-time network television....The comparison would, I hoped, give some clue to an ancient puzzle: Which is worse, smart or stupid?" Certainly no right-thinking liberal would make fun of *The New York Review of Books*.

But most of the essays reflect either no particular political orientation or, if anything, would appall anyone even moderately right-wing. This is all to the good, because the essays exhibit a remarkable breadth of style as well as substance, ranging from the decadent ("How to Drive Fast on Drugs While Getting Your Wing-Wang Squeezed and Not Spill Your Drink" and "Tune In, Turn On, Go to the Office Late on Monday," both recounting the richness of experiences with controlled substances and young girls) to the genteel ("Moving to Hampshire" and "Dinner-Table Conversation," both of which were right at home in *House and Garden*, their original place of publication).

An excerpt from the latter: "A good talker must have all the qualities of a good listener plus an ability to hold forth at length: to tell a fully rounded anecdote, make an elaborate jest, convey news in piquant detail, or give an unexpected coif to the feathers of reason. And a good talker must be able to do this without inspiring other guests to pitch him out a window. Such people are invaluable. They give the rest of us time to eat."

There is a touch of redneck here and there ("High Speed Performance Characteristics of Pickup Trucks") and a great deal of simply pure and wonderful creative writing. In "A Long, Thoughtful Look

Book Hints

The bicentennial of the constitutional convention occasioned an outpouring in 1987 of publications on the Founders. The outpouring has not yet ceased.

Two books, **Patriots** (New York: Simon & Schuster, 603 pp., $22.95), by A. J. Langguth, and **Turning 200** (New York: Richardson & Steirman, 395 pp., $21.95), by Jane Nevins, flesh out the lives of the rebels and thinkers who shaped the political institutions that have endured these 200 years. Both accounts conjure up lively images of men who are too often rendered unidimensional heroes in patriotic textbook histories.

In **Constitutional Journal: A Correspondent's Report from the Convention of 1787**, (Ottawa, Ill.: Jameson Books, 294 pp., $17.95), Jeffrey St. John offers a delightful account of the convention. A print and broadcast journalist, he takes the reader onto the convention floor by retelling events in the style of "eyewitness" reports.

John Phillip Reid adds to these entertaining accounts a more scholarly study of the ideas underpinning our revolution in **The Concept of Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 224 pp., $25.95).

Ideas about liberty and tyranny gain powerful expression in fictional format in Brad Linaweaver's **Moon of Ice** (New York: Arbor House, 248 pp., $17.95). The time is now, the world is our own, but America's history (and the world's) took a different turn in 1942 when Hitler won the war. The United States, a libertarian state, is a bulwark for individual freedom, but the manipulative German Reich threatens mankind.

Eminent Brazilian writer Jorge Amado's latest novel, **Showdown** (New York: Bantam, 448 pp., $18.95), explores life in the tropical frontier of Brazil's cacao region. Like his other works, this is a brilliant examination of Latin America's political and cultural realities.

—L. S.

Back at the Last Fifteen Minutes," he uses the insipid clichés of historical journalists to describe a very short time interval in epic proportions: "This was an important fifteen minutes for America....Some have called it the 'Me' fifteen minutes....It has not been a fifteen minutes without problems and difficulties. In certain areas it was a quarter hour of stagnation. Blacks have made very little economic progress since 8:45 this morning. Many of them don't have jobs and the rest are going to be late to work if they don't hurry up."

But O'Rourke may well be at his best with his political reportage. His recounting for *Rolling Stone* of the events leading up and subsequent to the Philippine elections was inspired and masterful, and may also suggest, ultimately, a reason for his eagerness to label himself a right-winger. Somehow his descriptive points of view on these and other matters seem more compelling when expressed against the backdrop of being conservative. His Republicanism, for example, did not at all inhibit him from describing former Philippine President Marcos in a decidedly non-Republican way: "Ferdinand Marcos is human sewage, an evil old power-addled flaming Glad Bag, a vicious lying dirtball who ought to have been dragged through the streets of Manila with his ears nailed to a truck bumper."

It's hard to imagine Bob Dole saying that.

Rob Kolson is a financial satirist who entertains business groups singing "The Bureaucratic Blues" and other irreverent ditties.

Pipe Smoking and Washing the Stoop

By Stephen Schwartz

The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age By Simon Schama, New York: Knopf, 698 pages, $39.95

At the end of the month of September 1665, while the plague snatched away the lives of 7,000 Londoners, the diarist Samuel Pepys, in his position as surveyor-victualler to the Royal Navy, was dispatched to the Kentish coast. His mission was to supervise the orderly distribution of cargoes seized by the English navigator Lord Sandwich, in an attack on Dutch commerce with the east. The prize goods were destined as a reward to the crews of Sandwich's ships. In examining the commodities that, in Dutch historian Simon Schama's words, were "chaotically heaped about the decks" of the Netherlands vessels, Pepys felt, as he recorded in his journal, that it was "as noble a sight as ever I saw in my life, the greatest wealth in confusion that a man can see in the world. Pepper scattered through every chink. You trod upon it and in cloves and nutmegs I walked above the knees, whole rooms full. And silk in bales, and boxes of copper plate...."

So did the enterprising Dutch make their way onto the stage of European history, as northern pioneers of the mercantile, capitalist economy. Further, their involvement in both the transcendent intellectual experience of the Protestant Reformation and in the rise of international trade and European colonization gave them and their cultural product—most importantly, Dutch and Flemish painting—an immense and unique resonance in the emergence of modern civilization.

But that is not the story Schama has chosen to tell. As he himself declares on the third page of his volume, his book is "an informal description that says nothing much about institutions or theologies or economic structures. Instead," he writes, "I have attempted to explore the paradoxes of being Dutch in terms of social beliefs and behavior. So there is a good deal more about pipe smoking and washing the stoop than about the Synod of Dordrecht or the economic origins of the Anglo-Dutch wars....Above all, I have wanted to discover how the Dutch made themselves up as they went along. What animated their sense of community; what generated their allegiance; what crystallized the set of manners that became recognizably their own?"

Readers of a book that has recently at-

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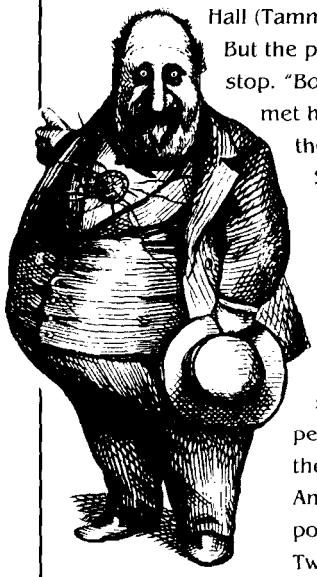

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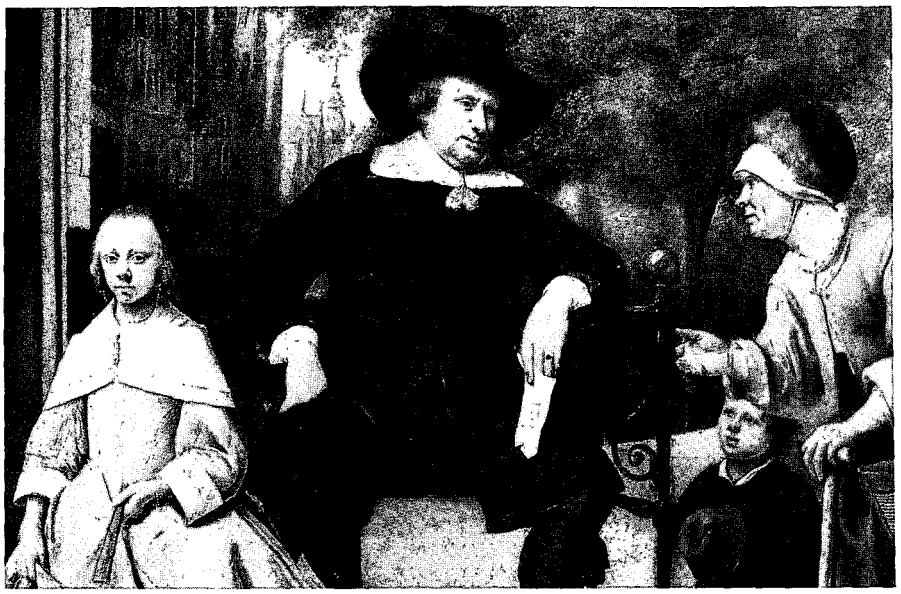


The Burgher of Delft and His Daughter, *painted by Jan Steen. The achievements of capitalist civilization are obscured by histories such as Schama's.*

tracted attention not only in "free-market" and conservative circles but also in the general reading public, Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The New History and the Old*, will immediately recognize in Schama's somewhat smug remarks the chief characteristics of the "new history." The "new history" is not interested in the rise of capitalism, and least of all the role therein of the Protestant religion, nor, horror of horrors, in the history of the Dutch seafarers. To the "new historian" these are the ideological constructs of white patriarchy. Much better to study, as Himmelfarb notes and as the well-known historian (and crypto-Marxist) Lawrence Stone sheepishly admits, "tiny, separate specialties" ranging from women's history to the history of mobs and riots: pipe smoking and washing the stoop.

"New history" is not pop history, although it closely resembles it; which is its paradox. That is, like pop historians, "new historians" such as Schama assemble a highly readable, colorful, and picturesque account of daily life in the past; but unlike pop history, their work is often characterized by obsessive and obscure detail and by a very academic attachment to psychological and anthropological theorizing. Still, it seems very literary—as if the new historian of the Schama variety might actually be a poet or novelist manqué.

As if to emphasize this "highbrow" quality in his work, Schama's big book is profusely illustrated with paintings and engravings, most of them by second-line or mediocre artists or drawn from folk sources. But there is, as he has noted, more about such items as the Dutch mania for sweets and the dental surgery of Rembrandt van Rijn than about the greatness of his paintings.

The problem with this approach is that the Dutch did not become known to the world because of their consumption of sweets or because of their attitude about homosexual activity on the streets of Amsterdam (which receives considerable treatment here) or because of their attachment to vulgar engravings depicting soiled infants. Indeed, in these attributes, upon which Schama dwells in such loving detail, the Dutch hardly are different from the Danes or the North Germans or for that matter the Croatians or Tibetans. The Dutch did not come to the attention of the world because their women scrubbed the stoops or even because they built dikes. All these are mere cultural metonyms for the great things that set the Dutch apart from their neighbors in Europe: their seafaring and imperial adventures, their development of capitalism, their role in the rise of Protestantism, and their great (not second-rate or folk) art.

These are things that the Danes, the Tibetans, and even the Renaissance Italians or the British have no claim to with the same profound configuration as the Dutch. It is that, not the miscellany of their daily lives, that makes the Dutch interesting.

In ignoring the grand and concentrating on the petty in the history of his culture, Schama has assembled a work that is, nonetheless, somewhat extraordinary; a kind of encyclopedia of small details. Further, the work is somewhat unintentionally funny to an English reader who in most cases can have virtually no understanding of the importance of many names and references. Schama has naturally made no effort to surmount the barrier of ignorance between the Netherlandish and Anglo-Saxon worlds, apparently viewing any attempt to recount to English or American readers the significance of figures or dates in "old-style" Dutch history as an unpardonable concession to the same bigoted souls who might derive some satisfaction or utility from a history of the Dutch church or the Dutch economy or the empire.

But details can be entertaining, and Schama's writing is notably lush. To those romantics—and there are many—who luxuriate in descriptive passages as evoked at the beginning of this review, there is much that is pleasing in these pages, and some that is useful to learn. For example, it turns out that the legendary tolerance of the Dutch for the Jews who had been driven out of Spain and Portugal was not so generous as one might have thought. There is a tantalizing and brief set of references, toward the beginning, to the Dutch Protestants' self-identification with the Hebrews of ancient times. This is something they shared with the English Puritans—a point that lends itself to a great deal in the way of interpretation but that remains largely ignored by Schama, concerned as he is with such pressing matters as the cost of pots and pans.

Toward the end of the book, Schama comes to treat the Jews in Holland as a category of "outsiders," near "deviants" in his psycho-anthropological scheme of things, and truth is revealed. Not surprisingly, considering the time and the place, Schama finds evidence that the Jews were not central to Dutch capitalism but remained "discreet and marginal."

Still, the consistent absence of a real contextual framework for Schama's observations makes the task of reading him at turns fascinating and irritating. That is, perhaps, his intention; such would fit in

with the very literary character of the work. It might be, then, something more like a novel or extended personal meditation than a book of history; it might even be satire. Frankly, the whole of "new history" seems to be largely a gimmick.

There is more about the dental surgery of Rembrandt than about the greatness of his paintings.

Such logical axes or structures of order that Schama has incorporated into this book draw, in the previously noted new history style, on anthropology more than anything else. Cultural habits are arranged in neat dialectical counterpositions, so that along with the myth of the Dutch housewife there also appears the semiunderground and semipornographic genre of the loose woman. The method is rather pallidly taken from Claude Levi-Strauss and gleams with a superficial and, again, a sort of literary allure. But does it tell us anything we don't already know about every nation, ourselves included?

If that is Schama's attempt—to assemble out of Dutch life a portrait of the general psychology of European life during the golden age—he has succeeded, and brilliantly so. But as I came to the end of his book a rather sad thought occurred to me. In 1940, during his stirring radio talks from London to the world, Winston Churchill many times referred to the Dutch and "their noble services to the cause of European freedom," which Churchill affirmed would be remembered long after memory of Nazi Germany had faded away. Reading Schama makes one wonder how it is that our culture so quickly lost sight of the grandeur of those services, for not only do "histories" of this kind obscure the achievements of capitalist civilization, it is hard to imagine readers nurtured on them even formulating the questions that would lead to the reestablishment of this historical memory, so necessary, so vitally necessary today.

Stephen Schwartz is author of two historical works, Brotherhood of the Sea, *a history of radical unionism in the West Coast maritime industry, and the forthcoming* Spanish Marxism vs. Soviet Communism *(Transaction Books).*

Senior Advisor but Hold the Macro

By William A. Niskanen

Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: Tough-Minded Economics for a Just Society
By Alan S. Blinder, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 256 pages, $17.95

Alan Blinder's lively polemic makes the case for economic policies based on a "profound respect for the virtues of free markets with profound concern for those the market leaves behind." He argues, I believe correctly, that many economic policies could be substantially improved before addressing the more difficult issues where there is some trade-off between free markets and measures to help the poor and disabled.

The strongest sections of *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts,* and maybe the most surprising to a lay audience, bear on issues on which there is broad agreement among economists—the inadvisability of such policies as wage-price controls, minimum wages, price and entry regulations, and rent control, for example. In addition to discussing these, Blinder summarizes the conventional arguments for free trade and effectively responds to the arguments for protection in the name of national security, infant industries, unemployment, the Japan issue, and the new arguments for "strategic" trade policy.

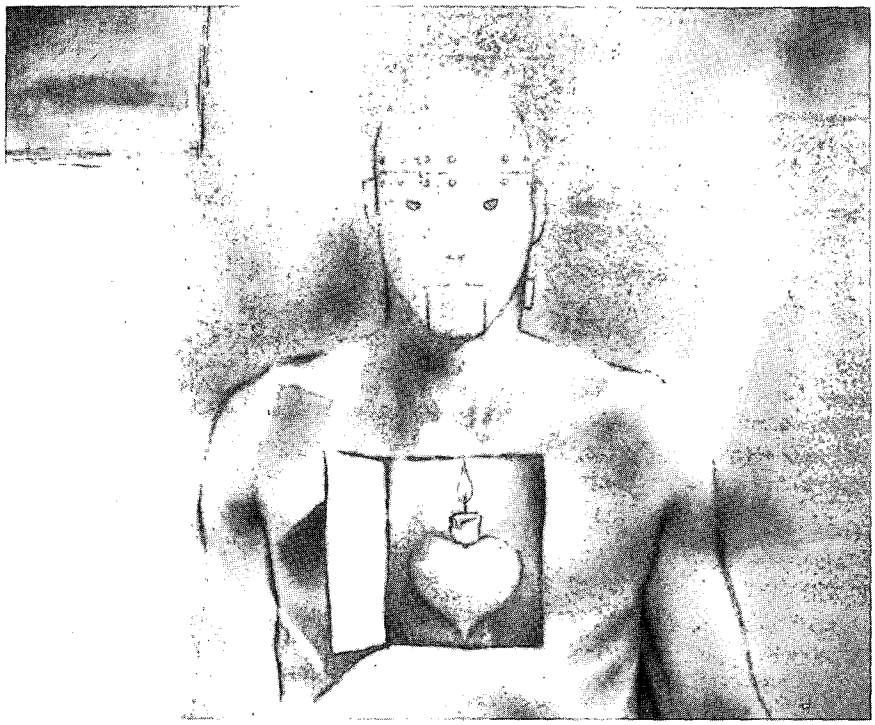
A fine chapter on environmental policy makes the case for substituting marketable permits for the current web of command-and-control regulations. A marketable permit is a right to emit a specific amount of a specific pollutant in a given area and period. The sum of these permits would be limited to that necessary to achieve the ambient environmental quality desired in each area. The opportunity to buy and sell these permits would allow each plant to choose its level of pollution and the most efficient means to achieve this level. Changing to such a system would permit both lower costs and a cleaner environment.

In a clever development of Murphy's Law, Blinder recognizes, however, that "economists have the least influence on policy where they know the most and are most agreed; they have the most influence on policy where they know the least and disagree most vehemently." And his explanations of this perverse condition are on the right track.

Politicians often reject the near-unanimous advice of economists on these issues, because they are more responsive to concentrated benefits than to diffused costs. Politicians are more enamored of the extreme positions within economics, because they seem to offer a "free lunch": for example, the promise of simplistic Keynesianism that an increase in government spending could have a "multiplier" effect on national output; Art Laffer's conjecture that a general reduction in tax rates might increase total tax revenues; the rational-expectations argument that inflation can be reduced without a reduction in employment and output; and so forth.

Blinder recognizes that this version of Murphy's Law can be broken, citing as examples the loosening of price and entry regulations governing communications, commercial transportation, and banking beginning in the late 1970s, and the Tax Reform Act of 1986. He also has some useful suggestions for making it safe for politicians to support good economic policy. His general proposal is to package policy proposals—in some cases to compensate concentrated losers, in other cases to force special interests to compete against each other.

A note about the 1986 tax act: While most economists, including Blinder, consider it an improvement over the prior tax code, I do not share this enthusiasm. Much of the reduction in individual tax rates was financed by increasing the effective tax rates on new corporate investment. Blinder's evaluation of this act is not very hard-headed, and he does not understand the consequences of this change on the distribution of wealth in the United States. The business provisions of



the 1981 tax legislation in effect redistributed wealth from the owners of the existing capital stock to American labor, yet these provisions were generally opposed by liberals. The 1986 business provisions had the opposite distributional effect but were broadly supported by liberals. Thus, in this instance, Blinder and his liberal economist colleagues are neither hard-headed nor soft-hearted.

The weakest chapters of Blinder's book bear on macroeconomic policies, the issues on which there is also the least consensus among economists. Blinder states that his book ignores most issues for which there is a trade-off among desirable conditions. But he then plunges into a confused argument that American economic policy exaggerates the perils of inflation and underestimates the virtues of low unemployment. The costs of a stable positive inflation rate are probably quite low, but most economists believe that there is no long-run trade-off between inflation and unemployment. In contrast, Blinder appears to believe that we *could* achieve a higher long-run level of output and employment by measures that would increase the inflation rate.

Blinder regards himself as a Keynesian, and he is predictably caustic about monetarism, "rational expectations," and supply-side economics. However, his own concept of Keynesian economics is quite strange. He describes the characteristic Keynesian prescription for unemployment as "speed up growth in the money supply to push interest rates down and spur aggregate demand." This seems more like the views of some monetarists who argue that a change in money growth has significant temporary real effects, whether or not they are anticipated.

Discretionary monetary policy may be more effective, and more feasible, than discretionary tax and spending (fiscal) policies, but it seems odd to describe this prescription as Keynesian, a position that is usually associated with the use of discretionary fiscal policy to stabilize total demand. Moreover, Blinder's characterizations of the competing macroeconomic perspectives are artificial. Monetarists are described as advocating constant money growth without regard to changes in velocity. Rational expectations is described as an elegant theory without empirical content. Blinder dismisses supply-side economics without acknowledging its important contribution to understanding the effects of the budget and the tax code's details.

Armed with 20-20 hindsight, Blinder is contemptuous of the Reagan fiscal policy, arguing that "the colossal budget and trade deficits...were the predictable consequences of that change in policy." Maybe so, but *no one* predicted these effects in 1981. Blinder attributes the Reagan fiscal policy to supply-sider Art Laffer's "flight of fancy," but no administration budget projection or economist ever claimed that the general tax acts approved in 1981 would increase revenue. As with any administration, the Reagan administration was subject to some illusions, experienced both good and bad luck, and made some mistakes.

Blinder claims that his views are opinionated but not partisan. As a senior advisor to the Reagan administration, however, I cannot accept his characterization of Reaganomics—"the worst of both worlds: a soft head and a hard heart"—as anything but partisan.

Blinder is smart, witty, a good writer, an effective polemicist, a principled Democrat, and a fine economist. This book should convince anyone that the next Democratic administration should appoint Blinder as a senior adviser—for microeconomics.

William A. Niskanen, the author of Reaganomics: An Insider's Account of the Policies and the People *(Oxford University Press), served on the Council of Economic Advisers from 1981 to 1985.*

An American Woman, by Kati Marton, New York: Norton, 272 pages, $15.95. The road back home is a treacherous one for Anna Bator. Author Kati Marton makes this point in numerous ways, including telling us that Bator means "brave" in Hungarian. The story is told with skill and style.

A career journalist in the United States, Anna Bator returns to her birthplace, Hungary, to unearth her hidden and complex origins. A key figure is her father, Alex Bator. A convert from his Jewish origins, he eventually has to face his ethnic past when Hungary is subjected to Hitler's "final solution" as payment for the Hungarian government's political dependence on Germany. But Alex, a bourgeois at heart, is unwilling to embrace the Soviet-trained Communists—the only help Jews could find against the Nazis. Eventually the Communists gain power after World War II ends, and Eastern Europe is delivered into Stalin's arms. Ultimately, Alex's ambivalence leads to peril for his daughter, who becomes embroiled in international intrigue upon her return to Hungary to discover her family's past.

All this is told with rich enough plot

KEVIN FINNEY

to make for a good story. If you hail from Eastern Europe (as I do) the book will have even greater significance. Indeed, its reading can be a brave undertaking, because Marton does not spare the reader her intermittently subtle and blunt reflections on loyalty to one's native land.

An American Woman is significant on many fronts. It is a notable depiction of a Soviet-Marxist type of tyranny and what it can do to the souls of human beings, let alone to their attempts to lead reasonably prosperous lives. And it teaches historical awareness about both the Nazis and the Communists—something not usually found between the covers of the same book—conveying the inexcusable tyranny of both.

The work shows an unambiguous bias toward European cultural values, even while they are not spared some criticism. For example, Anna Bator prizes "a self-esteem based on squarely acknowledging [one's] inheritance." And throughout the story she castigates American "throw-away culture." She notes that in Hungary, "the conversation was real," in contrast to Philadelphia, for which this "American woman" feels "irreverence."

Marton fails to clearly understand and appreciate America's distinctive culture of individualism or the fundamental meaning of personal sovereignty and all the responsibilities that this entails. She shares the schizophrenia of so many American intellectuals who live—and really could only live—in a substantially free and peaceful American culture but yearn for the guaranteed stimulus of an artistic-historical setting produced by the blood and sweat of constant wars between cultural and ethnic collectivities, all of which vie for superiority and conquest.

No love of individual freedom blossoms in this novel, though Marton's background might be expected to yield it. Still, its value carries much of the story's punch. But America just hasn't enough depth for Marton's heroine, Anna. If Marton was *taken* from a tyranny (that is, if the book is autobiographical), perhaps this explains the more melancholy reflection on one's past than tends to be produced by people who chose to leave and to remain away. They understand that Europe, including even the substantially Western, bourgeois Budapest, is still steeped in the spirit of collectivist feudalism—self-esteem through inheritance.

—Tibor R. Machan

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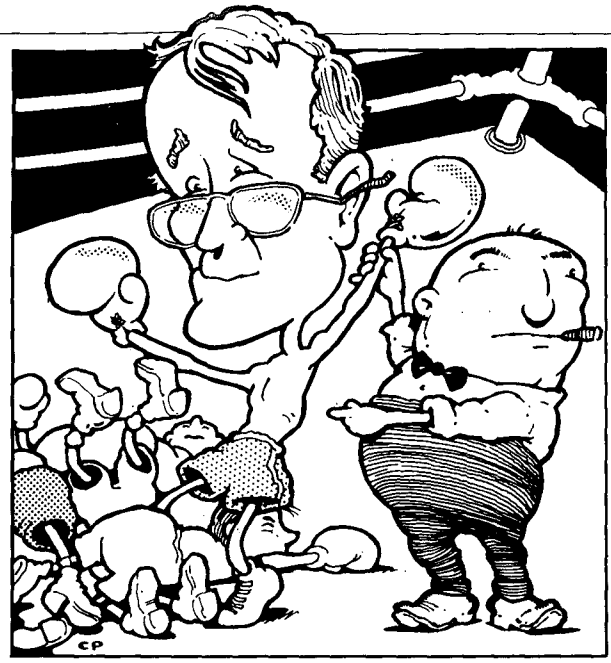
WHY DOES BUSH WIN?

BY DAVID BOAZ



As my colleague Eric O'Keefe says, the presidential campaign is just the opposite of the Olympics; television commentators kept saying of the hard-working young Olympians, "If only they could all win." With the campaign, one wishes they could all lose.

Still, the most gratifying aspect of the campaign is the voters' good judgment in deciding whom to toss out first. The tax increasers, the protectionists, and the crackpopulists—those who appeal to ignorant voters with crackpot economic schemes—have mostly been shown the door.

The crafty denizens of Iowa served the nation well by thrusting Rep. Richard Gephardt, Sen. Bob Dole, and I-am-not-an-evangelist Pat Robertson into the limelight. Gephardt's populism of privilege—government favors for farmers and inefficient companies threatened by foreign competition—played well in the Iowa caucuses. But his xenophobic nationalism bombed in New Hampshire and even in the Carolinas, home of the hard-pressed textile industry. Robertson likewise turned out organized voters in Iowa but faded badly in every primary. His army, we now see, was invisible largely because it was tiny.

Dole's collapse was perhaps the biggest surprise. For eight years, every time Dole shepherded a tax hike through Congress, the media hailed his statesmanship. This laudatory attention, plus his status as a midwestern neighbor, won him a victory in Iowa. But George Bush hit back, accusing Dole of being a tax increaser—conveniently forgetting that the Reagan-Bush administration had ultimately backed all of Dole's tax hikes. During a televised debate in New Hampshire, Pete du Pont handed Dole a pledge not to raise taxes and asked him to sign it. Dole refused. A few days later he suffered a defeat from which he never recovered.

On the Democratic side, all the candidates are itching to raise taxes, but only one made his lust explicit. Bruce Babbitt asked Americans to stand up for tax increases. The voters told him to sit down.

It's true that two antitax candidates—du Pont and Rep. Jack Kemp—also bowed out early. But neither Kemp nor du Pont offered a clear and consistent message. Kemp's enthusiastic support for tax reduction was combined with an equally vigorous defense of the Social Security system and the welfare state generally.

Du Pont stressed education tax credits, an end to farm subsidies, and a private alternative to Social Security, issues that should have had great appeal to young voters. But he threw away his chance with his antidrug crusade.

In fact, no candidate in either party has really offered the voters a vision for the future except Jesse Jackson. His is a crackpopulist vision if ever there was one, but it has a wide enough appeal to strike fear in the Democratic establishment.

As for the other remaining candidates, Gov. Michael Dukakis boasts of the Massachusetts miracle and says he can do the same for the rest of the country. But that would happen only if someone else cut taxes over his objections—the real source of the recent growth in his home state.

Sen. Al Gore is the real Max Headroom of American politics—a computer-generated candidate who tried out three messages in six months and is working up a new one. His campaign is being kept on life-support systems by journalists who don't want to admit that the real race is now between the uninspiring Dukakis and the unelectable Jackson.

And what of George Bush, who surprised a lot of us by emerging as a real frontrunner? He certainly has no vision and has never been identified with a clear set of principles or policies. Yet in this campaign he has enunciated some fairly clear stands. He pledges not to increase taxes, to cut the capital gains tax, and to back a taxpayer's bill of rights. He used the tax increase issue effectively against Dole, and campaigning in Milwaukee, when he was invited to visit the local IRS office, he declined, saying he wanted to "stay away from the IRS, like your basic average American."

Bush also speaks regularly of the need for tolerance, a word rarely heard in Republican speeches, and he has vigorously defended the INF treaty, calling it "good for my grandchildren and good for the whole world." In fact, the profile he has put together is arguably just the one to appeal to baby-boom voters.

And yet... it's just hard to believe Bush when he takes firm stands. Bush comes across as sort of a third carbon copy of the candidate one would like to see, a candidate who would speak out forcefully for tax reduction and smaller government, social tolerance, and arms control.

Indeed, if a candidate had campaigned on those themes—which we might sum up as peace and free enterprise—he or she might have done very well. As it happened, the candidate who came closest, Bush, has gained the clearest victory. But baby boomers are still waiting for a real peace and free-enterprise candidate.

David Boaz is vice-president of the Cato Institute.

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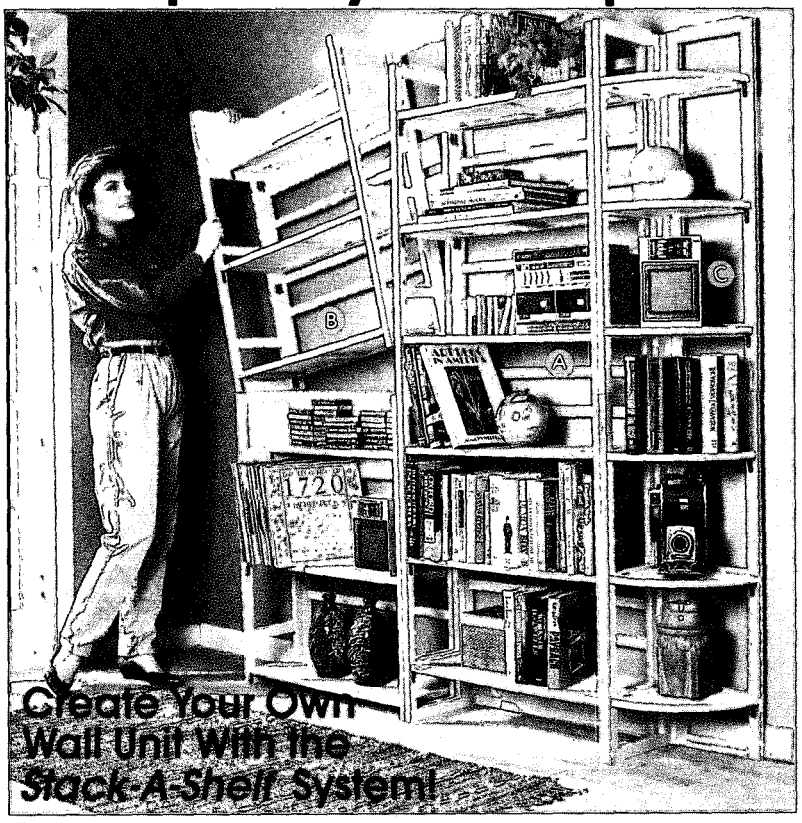

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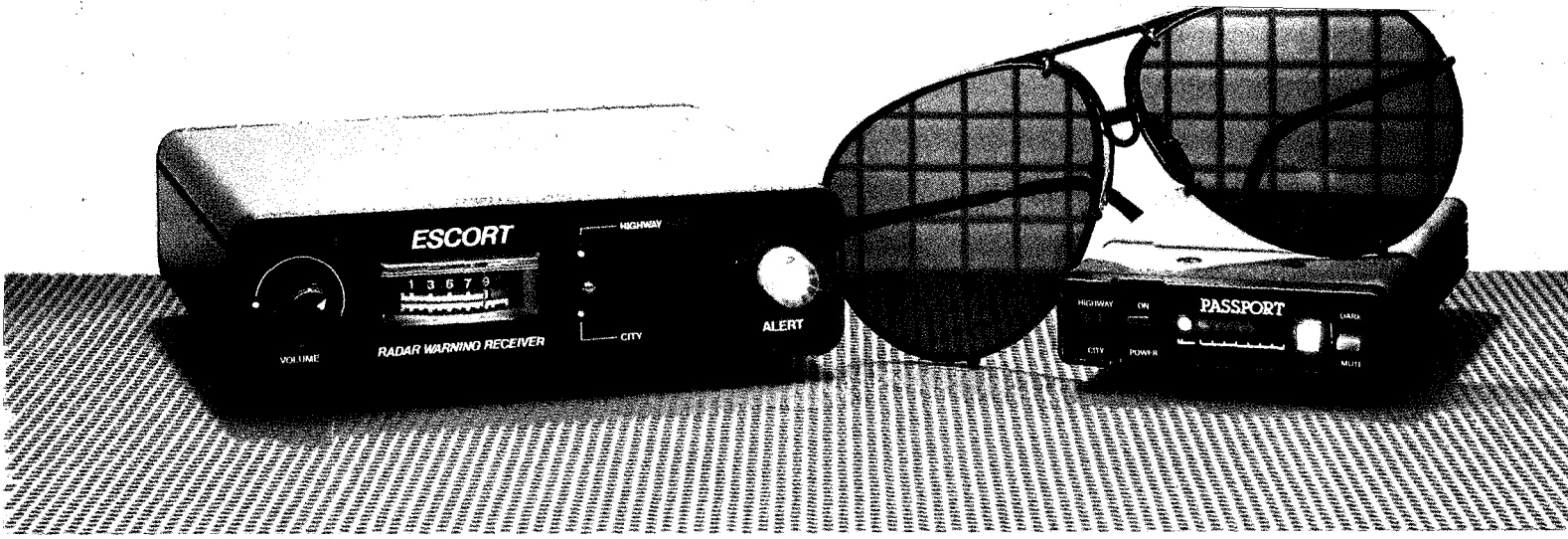

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							▷ 2ND Escort		▷ 2ND Escort	▶ 2ND Passport
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Fuzzbuster	Fox	Whistler	Whistler	Bel	Fox	Bel	K40	Cobra	Whistler	Snooper
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Fox	Snooper			Phantom		Radar Intercept	Bel	Gul	Snooper	Maxon
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